Lord Of Mysteries



FACELESS

WRITTEN BY

Cuttlefish that loves diving


XXI
THE WORLD

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Edited by: ***MidnightSoul***


I
THE MAGICIAN

Chapter 214: Land of Hope

Choo-choo!

A train whistle resounded in every corner of the station as a metal behemoth, in the form of a steam locomotive, came to a slow stop with more than twenty carriages in tow.

Dressed in a tuxedo and half top hat, Klein was carrying an exaggerated luggage bag that appeared incongruent with his figure. He took a firm step onto the ground of the Loen Kingdom's capital, Backlund.

This city was divided into two regions by the Tussock River which flowed to the southeast. The two lands were connected by the Backlund Bridge and ferries, with a population exceeding five million people. It was the most prosperous capital in the Southern and Northern Continents.

Klein looked far into the distance and saw faint yellow smog everywhere. Visibility was terrible, and the gas lamps hanging above the train platform were already lit to dispel the gloominess and darkness.

It's only half past six? It looks like it's nine or ten... Klein shook his head indiscernibly. Suddenly, he recalled a joke he read on the Tussock Times.

A gentleman who just arrived in Backlund finds himself lost in the thick smog. Helpless, he asks a drenched gentleman passing him by, "How do you get to the Tussock River?" The gentleman answers him in a friendly manner, "Walk straight without stopping. I just swam from there [1]."

Every time I read Backlund newspapers or magazines, the reporters and editors will make a mockery of the polluted air or the increasing number of foggy days in every conceivable way possible... Previously, the Backlund Daily Tribune even did the statistics, and it was found that it has gone from about 60 days a year from thirty years ago to the present 75 days a year... For this, many farsighted people established organizations like the Soot Reduction Association, Smoke Reduction

Association... Apparently, there was a bill in September that motioned the need to establish the National Atmospheric Pollution Council... Klein lowered his huge luggage bag and pinched his nose to gain respite from the sudden discomfort.

Then, tracing his golden chain, he fished out a golden pocket watch from his vest pocket. He popped it open and looked at the time.

When he truly bade farewell to his siblings, he had especially visited a department store and spent 4 pounds 10 soli to buy a golden pocket watch and matched it with a golden chain worth 1 pound 5 soli.

To not constantly be aware of the exact time made him feel a sense of horror.

Klein had planned on buying a silver pocket watch as he felt it matched his temperament. But after considering the true essence of a Clown, he finally chose a more showy and exaggerated golden watch.

6:39... It's not that much later... Klein put away his pocket watch and held his cane and luggage bag as he slowly walked out the steam locomotive station with the crowd.

Suddenly, he made a sudden turn, causing a person who was secretly tailing him to have his hand fall empty when reaching for his pocket.

Klein was unfazed by this episode as he followed the cementpaved road and mixed into the crowd, arriving at an intersection in front of him.

There was a lawn and garden that circled around a column that resembled a chimney.

No, it's very likely a chimney... Klein saw the column spewing thick smoke from its top end.

A portion of the smoke floated high into the sky as a portion condensed into tiny liquid droplets that scattered everywhere.

Klein paused once again and placed his luggage down. He spread open the newspaper and map that he had held onto using his other hand.

While on the steam locomotive, he had already planned where he was going to go or what to do next.

The experiences that he had undergone, and the mental experience that he had, when disguised as a clown in the morning, made Klein finally understand the true essence of a Clown—"Although being capable of knowing a little about fate, one remains helpless towards fate; therefore, one might as well use a smiling face to hide all the pain, sorrow, confusion, and depression."

At that moment, he clearly felt the Clown potion "digest" and believed that if he continued "acting" this way, it wouldn't take long for him to make another attempt at advancing.

But herein lay the problem—he didn't know the corresponding name of the Sequence 7 potion, much less know its exact formula.

How should I obtain the formula? The Secret Order seldom appears. They only seem to be interested in the Antigonus family's items... This is also why others have little understanding of them. Yes... I should consider two aspects. One, I need to come into contact with the local Beyonder circles and see if I can find clues. Two, I should set a trap and use the Antigonus family's treasure as bait to lure the Secret Order out. After all, I do possess knowledge of the strange vertical pupil formed from the numerous mysterious symbols.

But that's too risky. I need to be careful since the bait cannot be too good or too bad. It won't garner their interest if it's too bad, and if it's too good, I might end up attracting a shark, a shark that can swallow me whole... The Secret Order's leader, Zaratul, is a figure who guided Emperor Roselle. Maybe he had obtained the biggest slice of the pie during that revolutionary feast... Of course, he might not still be alive as that was something from two hundred years ago...

Amidst his thoughts, Klein felt the coldness of Backlund and couldn't help but shiver. He decided to find a residence as soon as possible.

He flipped through the papers and, once again, browsed through the rental section and saw a circled advertisement.

15 Minsk Street, Cherwood Borough... terrace house... Weekly rent of 18 soli...

Klein had thought this through very carefully about the area in which he was to stay in. Although Backlund had a population exceeding five million people, he still needed to be wary about meeting the local Nighthawks. Be it the newly transferred Daly or Lorotta, Aiur Harson, and Borgia that he previously met, they would definitely be able to recognize him.

Therefore, Klein eliminated the North Borough where the Church of Evernight's Backlund diocese's headquarters and Saint Samuel Cathedral, was. He also eliminated areas with the best security and the extremely strictly monitored Empress Borough and Western Borough. These two boroughs belonged to the nobles and the richest magnates, with more of the nobles living closer to Empress Borough.

After eliminating the worker areas, the harbor, and the East Borough and Backlund Bridge region where the poor gathered, Klein had few choices left. The first choice was Hillston Backlund where the Backlund Stock Exchange, Clearing House, Futures Center, the seven major banks' headquarters, various Trust Funds, rail companies, and bulk cargo commerce companies were. It was known as the financial, business, and economic center of the Loen Kingdom. The second choice was Cherwood Borough where there were many small companies and residential buildings.

The two boroughs had a lot of people in them, and the security was relatively good. It was good for hiding in. After serious consideration, Klein chose the cheaper Cherwood Borough.

The reason why he didn't seek out organizations like the Capital

Housing Improvement Company or Capital Housing Improvement Association was due to the fact that they needed identification which he couldn't produce at the moment.

If I can't find a place to rent today, I'll find a motel that doesn't need any identification to stay for the night... Klein gathered the things in his hand and carried his luggage. According to the map, he walked towards what seemed like a department store's entrance.

That was the Backlund Metro's entrance.

Yes, a metro!

The first time Klein saw the word “metro” on the newspapers and magazines, he nearly jumped in fright. He never expected that such a transportation vehicle had become a reality in this era which hadn’t entered the age of electricity.

It was born twenty-five years ago. It first connected both banks of the Tussock River and had now expanded to the key city boroughs. Of course, there weren’t many stations.

Through the main door, Klein followed the people ahead of him as he walked to the ticketing booth.

After being in line for a few minutes, he finally saw a cashier with a head with beautiful golden hair.

The lady didn’t raise her head. All she did was point at the wooden board by the side of the window with the prices.

Peak period (7am-9am, 6pm-8pm): 10-minute headway.

15-minute headway for all other times.

First-class seat: 6 pence

Second-class seat: 4 pence

Third-class seat: 3 pence.

Return trips are respectively: 9, 6, 5 pence.

Annual Pass

First-class: 8 pounds

Second-class: 5 pounds 10 soli

Third-class: No Annual Pass

It’s cheaper than I imagined... There’s actually no distance restriction... Melissa would definitely love this more than a horse carriage. This is the culmination of machinery... Klein thought as he suddenly felt upset.

He revealed a brilliant smile and fished out 4 pence and handed it to the cashier.

“Second-class seat.”

Smack! The cashier tore a ticket and stamped it before handing it to Klein.

After finding the line that led to Cherwood Borough and passing through the not-very-strict security checks, Klein went down the flight of stairs and quickly came to the platform. He followed the labels on the ground and found the corresponding location for second-class seats.

Choo-choo!

He didn’t wait long before he heard the chugging sound of the train and the thunderous steam whistle. He saw a huge steam locomotive

Its large and meandering body, together with its black metallic luster and complex machinery, mixed together to form a unique beauty.

Backlund’s metro still used steam locomotives. The smoke that they spewed was specially designed to enter a pipe above and travel through a chimney, out into the world.

This was also the true usage for the lawn and garden out on the streets.

Amidst the screeching sound of metal, Klein first waited for the passengers to alight before carrying his cane and luggage over slowly. He then allowed the conductor to check his tickets.

Unlike the third-class seats, the second-class seats were one person to a seat, so there were no concerns about having one’s seat snatched. Just as Klein sat down, stowed away his luggage, and leaned on his cane, he suddenly heard hurried footsteps.

He subconsciously looked towards the door and saw a thin, adolescent boy rush into the carriage.

The boy was wearing a coat that didn’t suit his age. He wore a rounded top hat and carried a ragged haversack. He kept his head very low.

“I’m sorry. I got on the wrong carriage. I’m from third-class...” He showed his ticket and apologized to the passengers before briskly walking towards the third-class carriage.

Klein retracted his gaze and once again confirmed his destination as he waited for the doors to the carriage to close.

At that moment, he heard chaotic and hurried footsteps. He then saw a few men dressed in black coats and half top hats rush into the carriage.

Are they chasing after that fifteen-year-old boy? Klein instinctively had such a thought.

He shook his head gently and continued reading his newspapers and map, just like the other passengers onboard the carriage.

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1. Joke adapted from English magazine ‘Punch’.

"Did you see a teenage boy? He's wearing an old coat!" One of the men who dashed into the carriage asked the conductor fiercely.

Klein glanced at the man through the corner of his eyes. He was thin and hardy; his skin a dark shade from prolonged exposure to the sun. His eyes were much more recessed than the typical Loen Kingdom citizen.

A highlander? Or a mixed blood? He nodded thoughtfully.

In the middle of the Northern Continent, the point where the Hornacis mountain range began, there was a highland which was extremely hot and dry. Most of it belonged under the Feynapotter Kingdom, while the area west belonged to the Intis Republic. The area to the east belonged to the Loen Kingdom. Its natives were thin and barbarians, but they were brave and skillful in warfare. A long time ago, they posed as one of the biggest problems for the three nations. But with the advancement of gunpowder, and the changes in the way war was carried out, these highlanders eventually recognized reality and submitted.

A large number of them left the highlands and entered Backlund, Trier, Feynapotter City, and the various flourishing cities or ports in the Northern Continent. Some were workers, while others became grunts of the local triads. They dared to kill and showed no fear of thorny situations.

The conductor was a man in his twenties. He shrank back when he heard that as he pointed in the direction of the third-class carriage.

"I saw him... He went that way."

The leader, wearing a black coat and half top hat, nodded indiscernibly. He led his men and rushed to the third-class carriage and showed no concern towards the surrounding passengers.

If I were that boy, I would've already alighted from the third-class carriage... As Klein read his newspaper, he began letting his thoughts stray.

About a minute later, the train whistled as the carriage doors closed.

Chug! Chug! The steam metro began speeding up as it cruised along. But at that moment, Klein suddenly sensed something as he looked up to see the door leading to the other second-class carriages.

The teenage boy walked slowly into the carriage wearing his old coat and round top hat while carrying a ragged haversack.

He looked adolescent and had refined facial features. His red eyes were staid and solemn.

...Impressive. He alighted from the third-class carriage and circled around to enter from the first-class carriage again? Was he afraid that his pursuers had partners waiting inside the metro station? Klein was slightly surprised. He felt that the boy's handling of the situation was rather mature and careful. He was much better than most people in their twenties.

He clicked this left molar lightly and secretly activated his Spirit Vision. He scanned the boy and saw that he was in a state of fatigue. His emotions were tense and he was dispirited. However, he still maintained a blueness that represented calm thinking.

Impressive... at his age... Klein mumbled silently as he lowered his head and continued reading his papers.

The boy didn't notice that he had been scrutinized by a Beyonder as he headed for the third-class carriage once again.

The rest of the journey happened stably and calmly. Klein arrived twenty minutes later at one of the three train stations in Cherwood Borough.

He took a rented carriage for nearly ten minutes before finding Minsk Street. According to the descriptions in the papers, he came to Unit 17 which was next to Unit 15 and pulled the doorbell.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

As sounds reverberated inside the house, a mechanical bird that didn't look too fancy popped out from above the door. It was about the size

of a palm and was made up of gears and other parts. It constantly nodded its head and let out the sound of a cuckoo bird.

Not a bad toy. It's just not very well-crafted... Klein made an objective assessment.

Nearly twenty seconds later, the dark door was pulled open. A young maidservant dressed in white and black looked warily at Klein and asked, "May I help you?"

Klein smiled and waved his cane which was now wrapped with the newspapers.

"I'm here to find Mrs. Sammer about renting a house. I'm guessing it hasn't been rented out?"

The full name on the newspaper was Stelyn Sammer.

"Not at all. Please wait a moment." The maidservant bent her back politely.

She rushed inside and reported to her mistress. Moments later, she came out again and ushered him in. She then helped him place his cane and luggage in the foyer and hung his coat and hat on a clothes rack in the same place.

A warm blast of air inundated him, dispersing the chill Klein had brought in. He scanned the area and first saw a uniquely designed fireplace. He saw pieces of red, smokeless charcoal burning inside.

Sammer's living room was rather big. It was nearly equivalent to the entire Moretti's first floor in area. Certain areas were decorated with carpets or oil paintings of beautiful sceneries.

The maidservant brought Klein to the sofa and said to her mistress in a pale yellow dress, "Madam, the guest is here."

The mistress was in her thirties. She had blonde hair and blue eyes. She looked rather pretty and had preserved her youthfulness well. She held a silver-inlaid feathered royal fan in her hand.

As she was at home, and the fireplace made for a warm environment, she didn't wear anything around her neck, revealing her white bosom and shiny long neck.

“Hello there, Mrs. Sammer.” Klein pressed one palm to his chest and bowed.

Mrs. Sammer smiled in a reserved manner.

“Good evening. Please, have a seat. Do you wish for some coffee or tea?”

Klein sat on the sofa and answered frankly, “Tea, please.”

“Julianne, Marquis Black Tea,” Instructed Mrs. Sammer. She then turned her eyes to Klein and asked, “How might I address you?”

“Sherlock Moriarty. You can call me Sherlock.” Klein had long thought of a fake name.

At that moment, he caught a whiff of a fragrance from the kitchen and saw complicated pipes.

“Heh, heh, those are my husband’s designs. Although his actual job is a manager at the Coim Company, he’s a machinery enthusiast. He’s also a member of the Kingdom’s Soot Reduction Association.” Mrs. Sammer noticed Klein’s gaze and explained with a smile.

Mrs, there’s no need to go into such detail. I’m not here on a blind date with your husband... Klein lampooned as he said without his smile waning, “Mrs. Sammer, I wish to rent the Unit 15.”

Mrs. Sammer straightened her back as she sat elegantly. She said with a smile, “I have to remind you of certain things. Unit 15 doesn’t have such pipes, reclining chairs, card tables, mahogany kitchen cabinets, fine porcelain, silver cutlery, gold-plated tea sets, or removable carpets...”

She pointed at the things in her house as she introduced them, one after another. After she was done, she added,

“It originally belonged to my elder sister and brother-in-law, but due to a business failure, my brother-in-law had no choice but to move to the Southern Continent. They have a plantation at Balam. However, I don’t agree with their choice. This is just too unfair for my niece and nephew. There are no good grammar schools there; not even a good home tutor.”

Mrs, that's not something I would like to know... Klein nodded sincerely and said, "Apart from the weather, there's no place in the Southern Continent that can compare with Backlund."

His agreement satisfied Mrs. Sammer greatly as her eyes darted slightly.

"This house still has a three years lease. I wish for you to pay a year's rent at once. 18 soli a week. The use of the furniture will cost 1 soli. I can collect a deposit of 50 pounds." Klein shook his head and smiled.

"Mrs. Sammer, you should be able to tell that I just arrived in Backlund. I don't know what will happen to me in time. To pay 50 pounds for a deposit will lower my ability to resist any risks.

My limit is half a year. 25 pounds."

He still planned on renting another one-bedroom apartment in Backlund's East Borough. He would use it to change his clothes, undergo disguises, and shirk off any tailing. It was necessary for what he planned to do.

Stelyn Stelyn nodded slightly and asked, "Have you studied at grammar school?"

Klein chuckled and said, "Yes, I later self-studied history."

"Do you have any identification with you?" asked Stelyn casually.

"I'm sorry. I was in a hurry when I left home and forgot to bring it with me. Heh, heh, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm from Midseashire." Klein deliberately used the accent his classmate, Welch, often used.

When he said "forgot," it reminded him of Captain Dunn Smith. The smile on his face turned even more brilliant.

At this moment, the maidservant, Julianne, brought a cup of black tea over. The cup was porcelain-white with classic flowery patterns. Some areas were plated in gold.

Klein took a sip and found the fragrance distant. The mix of sourness and sweetness were perfect, and it was clearly much better than the Sibe black tea he often drank.

“Very authentic Marquis Black Tea.” He complimented with a description which couldn’t be faulted.

Mrs. Stelyn Sammer curled her lips and said, “Then, let’s do half a year’s rent. 25 pounds.”

Klein thanked her and engaged in a few minutes of idle chatter with her until another maidservant found a service contract from the study.

After both parties signed the contract, Klein counted 25 pounds while feeling the pinch and pushed it to Mrs. Sammer.

Stelyn counted it silently before smiling.

“Mr. Moriarty, I believe you’ll be finding a job in Backlund?” “Yes,” Klein answered, feeling a little lost.

The corners of Stelyn’s mouth hooked up.

“I can give you some suggestions. With a weekly salary lower than 3 pounds, it would be difficult for you to live in Cherwood Borough. Your rent, food expenses, water, gas, and charcoal expenses, transport expenses, and everything else added up will cost at least 2 pounds 5 soli. Believe me, this is Backlund. One still has to consider new clothes and good cutlery and tea sets... A weekly salary of 3 pounds is the bare minimum.

“If your weekly salary reaches 5 pounds, you can hire a lady’s maid. At 6 pounds, you can consider hiring a chef. At 7 pounds, you can add a footman. For 8 pounds, you can hire an additional lady’s maid...”

Mrs. Sammer, I think you are flaunting your wealth... I once earned more than 10 pounds a week... Klein maintained his smile as he listened attentively.

At that moment, the door suddenly opened. A stout man walked in, he was dressed in a black double-breasted suit and leather gloves of the same color. Above his lips were two elegant mustaches.

“Luke, this is Mr. Moriarty. He will be our neighbor,” Stelyn Sammer went forward and introduced him.

Obviously the master of the house, Luke took off his coat and handed it to the valet behind him. He smiled politely and said, “Mr. Moriarty, would you like to join us for dinner?”

This is the manager of some Coim Company, a member of the Loen Kingdom’s Soot Reduction Association... Klein said with a smile, “I’m very sorry, Mr. Sammer. I’ve eaten on the steam locomotive; although, that taste does leave a deep impression on one.”

After exchanging some pleasantries, Klein was led by Julianne out of the house and into the neighboring Unit 15.

The layout was very similar to the unit next door. The first floor had a huge living room, a dining room with decent lighting, two guest rooms, a bathroom, a cellar, a kitchen that extended all the way back. On the second floor, there were four bedrooms, an activity room, a solarium, a study, two bedrooms, and a huge balcony.

“Mrs. Sammer wishes to tell you that you can rent out part of it, but not to workers or make this place too packed or noisy. Oh... I’ll bring you clean blankets, sheets, and pillow cases in a while.” Julianne returned to the Sammers after informing Klein.

After doing a round of packing, Klein finally settled into Backlund.

He sat in an empty living room and suddenly felt lonely. Hence, he forced himself to consider his future plans.

Whether he liked it or not, revenge and advancement couldn’t be done in the blink of an eye. Therefore, he had to obtain a lucrative job to prevent himself from facing any financial problems.

However, the job couldn’t restrict him and affect his movements and plans. In other words, he needed sufficient freedom.

After some deliberation and eliminating unsuitable jobs, Klein was left with three choices.

He could become an author by becoming a plagiarist. However, his identity was sensitive, so the more famous he became, the more trouble it meant. All he could do was give up unwillingly.

The second choice was to be a news reporter. This was considered quite a decent job in this time and age. However, job applications required his educational certificates and other documents. Klein was helpless in that respect.

Finally, he chose the third job.

Private detective!

This was also the reason why he had taken on a fake name.

Chapter 216: The Same-old Gathering

Klein started his first morning in Backlund under cold and humid weather conditions, with a light fog that provided very little visibility. For breakfast, he had one liter worth of cheap tea, costing one penny, and two pieces of toast with inferior butter in the center.

He was busy the entire morning, but he first went to the Cherwood Borough's Backlund Bulletin to post a tiny advertisement for a month at the cost of thirty pounds.

From Tuesday, the Backlund Bulletin's loyal readers would see a tiny advertisement along the seams of its seventh and eighth page.

Sherlock Moriarty. Good at various types of private investigations. Reasonable prices and strictly adheres to the principles of confidentiality. Resides at Cherwood Borough's 15 Minsk Street.

The reason why Klein didn't choose major newspapers like the Tussock Times or the Backlund Daily Tribune, that had a readership all across the entirety of the Loen Kingdom, was due to the fact that his business was temporarily limited to Backlund. Furthermore, he didn't wish for a sterling reputation.

Therefore, the Backlund Bulletin, which was well-received locally and had low advertisement fees, became his first choice.

After leaving the Backlund Bulletin's headquarters, Klein took out a map and followed it to purchase various herb powders and silver slices from various herbal stores, flower stores, jewelry stores, and accessory stores. He did it in preparation for holding a ritual. When items that didn't have any spirituality were involved, most of the materials in mysticism could be purchased from ordinary stores. However, they weren't all under one roof, requiring him to visit many stores to collect them.

To do so, Klein spent another 5 pounds. The humongous sum of 200 pounds that he withdrew broke below the 100 pound mark, leaving him only with 92 pounds.

"Spending money is as easy as drinking water..." Klein found a small cafeteria nearby and ordered a black pepper steak worth 8 pence.

He returned to 15 Minsk Street at one in the afternoon, and without rest, he spent his time using Slumber flower, dragon blood grass, dark red sandalwood, and mint powders to create Holy Night Powder, a key ingredient needed to create a wall of spirituality.

He could only make do with this method until he bought a real silver ritual dagger.

Klein speculated that he would have to advance to Sequence 7 before he could do away with this restriction.

Phew, Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and The Sun haven't requested for leave yet. The gathering will be held on time today... I wonder what surprises Mr. Hanged Man will bring me, and how many pages of Roselle's diary he can provide... Klein laid back on his bed in the bedroom and thought about all sorts of things.

To him, a private detective was a career that took into account both money and action. It allowed him to get in touch with people from all walks of life and slowly discover the Beyonder circle in Backlund. From there, he could slowly find clues regarding the Secret Order.

Of course, if he was lucky, he would even be able to figure out the Sequence 7 which corresponded to the Clown through a particular circle of Beyonders and buy the corresponding potion formula and main ingredients.

As for Ince Zangwill's whereabouts, Klein temporarily chose not to take the initiative to seek him out. He might even avoid him a little. However, if he were to accidentally discover this enemy of his, without exposing himself, he wouldn't mind doing a good deed and sending an anonymous letter to the Church of Evernight.

A private detective's income can, at most, support a middle-class standard of living. If I want enough money to buy the potion formula and Beyonder materials, It will either depend on Miss Justice, or it will be through investments with the remaining 100 pounds that I have left in my anonymous account... Yes, I can't touch the 92 pounds that I have for the time being. Perhaps, I wouldn't be having any income for some time... With this in mind, Klein suddenly sat up. He came to the first floor and began reading the various newspapers he bought in passing.

These newspapers often carried news about what had been invented and required investments, or how someone wished to form a joint venture with others to do a particular business.

Klein relied on his knowledge from Earth and his understanding of this era to carefully sift through the projects. Unfortunately, none of the ones on the papers today were reliable.

At fifteen minutes to three, he returned to his bedroom, locked the door, drew the curtains, and used Holy Night Powder to create a wall of spirituality.

Klein took four steps counterclockwise and arrived above the gray fog. He sat in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool before extending his spirituality and touching the crimson star that symbolized The Sun as if he was responding to a prayer.

This is one of the few things in my new life that hasn't changed... he suddenly sighed.

...

In an area outside of the City of Silver, in a grayish-black tower that was half-collapsed.

Nine members of a patrol squad were gathered around a blazing bonfire, chatting about their experiences in the past few days.

There were also a few other team members guarding the perimeter, prepared for any possible attacks that might break out from the darkness.

Many of the City of Silver's Beyonders had used their blood to teach them a lesson:

"At all times, never let your guard down. The monsters in the darkness could very well be right behind you!"

On a night when the frequency of lightning was very low, it was necessary to keep the flames burning and the light shining. Once they were completely enveloped in darkness, it wasn't impossible for them to all disappear—no one could say for sure just what terrible things

would happen in total darkness, because reality had broken the limits of their imagination time and time again.

Derrick Berg remained reserved and silent as he quietly listened to his companions reminiscing about the monster they had encountered before. It was a humanoid monster with eyes covering its entire body.

In order to finish off the monster, their patrolling team suffered a heavy price with five injured, and two of them severely injured.

Suddenly, Derrick's vision blurred, and he felt himself being enveloped in a thick gray mist.

In an inexplicably faraway place, in the depths of the gray fog, a blurry figure sat on an ancient high-back chair, looking down at him.

"Prepare for the gathering."

The Fool's voice echoed in Derrick's ears, but none of his teammates were aware of it.

After withdrawing his gaze and observing the area for more than ten seconds, Derrick moved to the very edge of the fire, leaned against the broken wall, and pretended to be asleep.

Ever since he found out that the members of the six-member council and Elder Lovia were unable to discover the existence of Mr. Fool, he gradually believed that as long as he didn't carelessly reveal any clues, he would be able to quietly attend the Tarot Club's gathering above the gray fog even under the gaze of others.

...

Backlund, Empress Borough.

Using the excuse that she was tired, Audrey returned to her bedroom.

She curbed her excitement and didn't pace back and forth; instead, she sat quietly on the bed, waiting for Mr. Fool's summoning.

Father was busy communicating with the other Members of Parliament about the proposed bill, and the Beyonder guard isn't tailing me constantly. Thank you Goddess; my life has finally returned to normal! Two weeks have passed, Mr. Hanged Man must've prepared the

pituitary gland of a mature Rainbow Salamander... I'm about to advance to Sequence 8! Audrey thought with sparkling eyes.

To her, this was even more exciting and worth looking forward to than the thirty thousand pound bounty and the large plantation worth at least 8,000 pounds!

Finally, she saw the familiar illusory crimson surge towards her like a tidal wave, drowning her.

...

On an ancient-looking sailboat.

Alger Wilson locked the door to the captain's cabin and sat behind a sextant and the ship logs. He kept memorizing the contents of the thick stack of sheets in front of him.

After the investigations, he left the bustle of Backlund without any qualms after being rewarded by the upper echelons and returned to the sea, carrying a batch of secretly copied Roselle diary pages.

After digesting the Seafarer potion, I'll be able to advance normally. My contributions are enough for me to trade for the formula and ingredients... However, this will expose the fact that I know the "acting method." There are advantages and disadvantages... Alger shook his head, suddenly distracted.

At that moment, he felt the summoning of The Fool. His mind suddenly recalled the face of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos whose flesh and blood quickly rotted as pieces of his face peeled off.

Alger instinctively lowered his head, allowing the crimson tide to engulf him.

...

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

Having activated his Spirit Vision, Klein examined Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun to confirm their current states.

Audrey was about to happily greet everyone when she suddenly saw The Hanged Man gesturing to her before rushing to speak before her.

"Mr. Fool, I've obtained nineteen pages of Roselle's diary this time.

"Here, I must thank you for sending your Blessed to help me get rid of Qilangos. These diary pages will be the compensation I should pay!"

19 pages? Not bad... Klein didn't talk much about the Blessed as he smiled faintly.

"That is the principle of equivalent exchange."

As expected of Mr. Fool... A Pirate Admiral with a mystical item was nothing to "Him"... From the looks of it, I don't have to mention my claiming of the bounty... I wonder how many HighSequence Beyonders Mr. Fool has as "His" Blessed... Audrey had begun to use the word "He," "Him," or "His" to refer to The Fool without realizing it.

Upon hearing The Fool's answer, Alger said humbly, "The limit of my current memory is six pages. Please allow me to give them to you over separate occasions."

"No problem." Klein, who was surrounded by thick gray fog, nodded gently.

The Sun Derrick looked at the pages that appeared before The Hanged Man and was very curious about the contents of the diary.

With his previous experiences, he believed that the items that Mr. Fool was interested in definitely contained many mysteries.

He looked at Miss Justice and when he saw that she didn't have the impulse to ask, he cautiously maintained his silence.

Soon, the six pages of the diary were complete and came into Klein's hands.

Audrey and the others began to wait quietly. They were already used to such things.

Klein looked down and read the first page:

"16th December. I managed to contact the pathetic fellow who's trapped in the storm and was lost in the darkness."

Finally, there's a follow-up to one of the previous pages of the diary...
Klein was delighted, and he became more focused:

"He called himself Mr. Door and tried to teach me a complicated and difficult ritual. He wanted me to help him return to the real world and promised to fulfill three of my requests.

"Does he think I'm stupid? I've lived for more than sixty years over my two lives. Does he think I can't tell that this is the usual manipulation done by evil gods and devils?

"But the history of the Fourth Epoch that he described was truly interesting."

Chapter 217: Mr. Door's Description

Mr. Door... This naming style is very similar to mine... I wonder what was the real name of this pathetic fellow who was lost and trapped in the deep darkness amidst the storms is, and what his Sequence is. Or rather, just as Emperor Roselle had guessed, he's one of the evil gods or devils... Klein let out a silent chuckle which was mixed with ridicule and self-deprecating humor. He was also interested in the history of the Fourth Epoch.

"I know of the most famous 'War of the Four Emperors' in the Fourth Epoch, but the specific details and the main figures involved are limited to the information spread by the major Churches. For example, the 'Black Emperor' of the Solomon Empire.

"It wasn't until today that this so-called Mr. Door finally answered my questions by letting me know who the remaining three emperors are. The half-insane Blood Emperor of the Tudor Dynasty, the Night Emperor of the Trunsoest Empire, and the Emperor of the Underworld of the Southern Continent, also known as Death.

"According to Mr. Door's description, in this war that changed the situation of the entire world, the Black Emperor, Blood Emperor and Night Emperor fell one after another. The Emperor of the Underworld reaped the greatest benefits.

"Having said that, Mr. Door added with profound significance that after over a century of 'digestion,' Death went mad, but he also became stronger. Therefore, Death teamed up with the Primordial Demoness and brought about a Pale Disaster for the Northern Continent. Of course, this isn't something he witnessed personally, but rather something that he hears when he comes close to the real world every month.

"Death went mad, but also became stronger!

"Even deities can go mad?

"What a horrifying sentence!

"However, this also confirms my guess. Before the Fifth Epoch, those deities would often descend into the real world, directly interfering

with the situation in the Northern and Southern Continents. They might even personally appear just like Death.

"I asked Mr. Door if he had participated in the 'War of the Four Emperors'? If so, what role did he play? And what was the position the seven deities maintained in this war? What role did they play?

"Mr. Door didn't answer my question. He only said in a teasing manner that the number of pre-eminent mighty figures in the Fourth Epoch far exceeds my imagination.

"In addition, he also mentioned two laws, one is the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, and the other is the Law of Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, which is consistent with certain things that I have learned from that most secret and ancient organization, and also from some of the phenomena I have observed. Heh, this can lead to many interesting conclusions, making many explanations take on other forms, making one's mind tremble in horror. For example, when there are too many High-Sequence Beyonders in the same Sequence pathway, the Low-Sequence Beyonders would reduce, and vice-versa.

"...The Beyonder Characteristics had been fixed at the source. It will not increase or decrease. Does this mean that there really is a God who created all the deities, an omnipotent and omniscient God, and everything originated from Him?"

This was the longest Roselle diary that Klein had ever seen. It took up two full pages, and one could imagine that it originally came on a double-sided page. It only became two separate pages after repeated copying.

That's a lot of information... Klein sighed silently.

As a history student who had graduated normally, he had always believed that the Solomon Empire, the Tudor Dynasty, and the Trunsoest Empire came one after the other in a line, with a certain degree of restoration before a new political outcome was established. To his surprise, the War of the Four Emperors described by Mr. Door clearly and unambiguously revealed one thing—all three empires had existed at the same time!

If this were true, then it would really overturn most of the current research on the Fourth Epoch in the field of history. Klein suddenly thought of the original Klein, who was filled with interest towards archeology and the history regarding the Fourth Epoch.

Today, I've helped him achieve his wish... I wonder if Death had already become a true deity during the War of the Four Emperors. It's hard to determine according to Mr. Door's descriptions. I can only first assume that the Emperor of the Underworld, who had obtained benefits from the War of the Four Emperors, had broken through his limits and become a deity, but "He" also went mad as a result...

To have a deity go mad was truly terrifying. Just thinking about the details makes one tremble from the bottom of their heart! It's no wonder that the knowledgeable Emperor Roselle would use the word "horrifying" to describe this matter...

Could it be that the so-called evil gods were crazy orthodox deities?

Would that mean that there might only be evil gods left in this world one day...

Man, does this mean that the end of days cannot be stopped?

Klein smiled to hide the growing solemnity of his emotions. He felt that the future he imagined was filled with a dark gray hue.

At the same time, he raised his evaluation of the Black Emperor, Blood Emperor, and Night Emperor, believing them to be the preeminent mighty figures who were close to being deities.

Perhaps that means Sequence 1 is the peak existence of a single pathway. According to this logic, for Black Emperor to live for centuries or over a millennium wouldn't be unacceptable. That would explain the original Klein's confusion. He had obtained contradictory findings from the content recorded in the Antigonus family's notebook with his own mentor's viewpoint. He believed that the Black Emperor was the common name used by every emperor of the Solomon Empire... Perhaps, the Black Emperor had always been the same Black Emperor... Of course, other possibilities cannot be eliminated. For

example, they could've been replaced two or three times, but is the name of that pathway's Sequence 1, Black Emperor?

I wonder who Mr. Door is in the history of the Fourth Epoch... Emperor Roselle didn't go into detail when describing his erroneous experiments and accidental coincidences, making it impossible for me to even try to converse with that Mr. Door.

The Laws of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation shares the same description as the one used by the Captain. Perhaps, the term he used came from Emperor Roselle.

According to the two laws described by Mr. Door, we can indeed deduce a lot of interesting speculations. For example, with there being so many holy artifacts and High-Sequence Beyonders in the Seven Churches, there shouldn't be many Low-Sequence Beyonders. But this contradicts reality, and the only reasonable explanation is an additional gift from the deities?

For example, is the destruction of the Nation of the Evernight due to the Conservation of Characteristics, that the mere possession of resources causes it to be in trouble? Or could it be said that their existence seriously weakens the potency of the Evernight pathway and threatens the position of the Goddess?

For example, theoretically speaking, certain Sealed Artifacts could also be used as the main ingredients for potion materials, or they can even be considered equivalent to potions. Of course, the prerequisite is to remove all latent dangers and madness.

...

No wonder the documents that were unearthed called the Fourth Epoch, "the Epoch of the Gods." So it turns out that in this epoch, there are many records of deities descending.

Then what caused them to stop coming, to the point of there not being any revelations?

If it wasn't for the fact that Beyonders receive responses from ritualistic magic, perhaps many of them would've doubted the existence of the deities...

Many ideas came to Klein suddenly as he felt that he had delved deeper into the realm of mysticism in this Beyonder world.

He flipped through the next four pages and was disappointed to realize that they were no longer related to Mr. Door.

His ability as a Clown allowed him to conceal his emotions well, and coupled with the gray fog's obstruction, even Audrey, who was secretly observing him, didn't notice anything amiss.

He gathered his chaotic thoughts and started reading the third page of the diary:

"10th September. I've endured it for a long time, but I still can't help but complain a little.

"I must've had f**king sh*t for brains to chose the Savant path, right?

"Of course, this has indeed allowed me to develop my greatest advantage, allowing the Church to attach great importance to me. But the problem is that the first few Sequences lack any Beyonder powers needed for combat. I can only make do by relying on mystical items and rely way too much on external items.

"For example, Sequence 9 Savant only has extraordinary abilities in memory, learning, and practical skills. For example, Sequence 8 Archaeologist gains a strong physique and corresponding ancient knowledge, and they can only barely apply some ritualistic magic. For example, Sequence 7 Appraiser, whose ability is to quickly identify mystical objects, allowing them to avoid hidden dangers to the greatest extent. For example, Sequence 6 Artisan, who can produce machinery wonder but not very powerful Beyonder objects. Apart from that, one's standard in ritualistic magic will be enhanced. It's no wonder its modern name is Machinery Specialist.

"Comparatively speaking, the Sequence 7 Warlock and Sequence 6 Scrolls Professor of the Mystery Pryer pathway are sufficiently

tempting. It would be great if only the Church has the complete Sequence and that the Hidden Sage doesn't exist.

"However, I finally received some good news. After I advance again, I'll gain Beyonder powers combat powers that I can call my own. Sequence 5 Astromancer!

"Its modern name scares me a little. It's actually called Astronomer...

"Am I going to end up as an all-powerful mad scientist?

"Heavens have mercy on me. I was only a second-tier student at the college entrance examination!

It had to be said that Emperor Roselle had a strange talent for making jokes. Even the recently dispirited Klein couldn't help but twitch his mouth, wishing to light a candle for this senior.

Study hard and improve by the day is indeed a wise saying... He lampooned and remembered the unique trait of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

They lacked Beyonder powers when it came to combat, but they were good at making and using items.

After flipping to the third page of the diary, Klein continued reading.

"2nd June, the kingdom has created chaos, again and again, instigating wars without being able to completely destroy the Feysac Empire, the Loen Kingdom, and the Feynapotter Kingdom. As such, the kingdom has no choice but to shoulder huge debts, and its economy is on the verge of collapse.

"From my observations, the people, merchants, and soldiers are very dissatisfied. The riots are just lacking a spark! This is my chance.

"But I have to be very careful. The Sauron family has witnessed the history of the Fourth Epoch and is an ancient family with a high possibility of having High-Sequence Beyonders. I need the support of the Church, as well as gain a tacit agreement with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

“I can’t appear immediately. First, I’ll let the rebels destroy order before I end it all as a protector. Consul Roselle Gustav. I like that name.”

"June 3rd. After discussing with Edwards and the others, I gave up on the idea of reaching a tacit understanding with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. This might very well reveal my true intentions, making the Sauron family and the ancient nobles who support them aware of them in advance and carry out a direct approach. That would make matters extremely difficult and dangerous.

"It's a pity that Grimm died in the Sea of Fog. He was the smartest among us.

"Descend into chaos! Descend! Only with everything in chaos will I get the chance to fish in troubled waters! Only when the Sauron family is incapable of handling this situation will the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun reluctantly acknowledge me!

"Perhaps I should give some help to those rebels, but how should I conceal myself so that no one would notice?

"June 4th, Zaratul from the Secret Order came to visit me in incognito very suddenly."

...

And then? Klein was just feeling intrigued over the reason why Zaratul—leader of the Secret Order—would seek Roselle on the eve of the rebellion and coup d'état when he realized that the two subsequent pages had nothing to do with it.

This made him feel a sense of irrepressible anger.

Although the three diary pages didn't provide very detailed descriptions, with rather straightforward accounts from Roselle, Klein could still feel the famous turmoil in Intis that happened in 1173, more than a hundred years ago.

The outcome was clearly recorded in history textbooks. As a colonel, Roselle quashed the rebellion and enacted political changes. The Intis Kingdom was transformed into a republic, with him acting as a self-appointed consul.

In the following 19 years, he reformed the penal code, encouraged inventions, and protected the industrial revolution. He greatly increased the country's strength and fought wars both north and south, making Lenburg, Masin, Segar, and other countries protectorates under the Intis Republic. He also made the three mighty countries on the Northern Continent—the Feysac Empire, the Loen Kingdom, and the Feynapotter Kingdom —bow their heads.

At the end of 1192, almost twenty years after his appointment as consul, Roselle converted the Republic into an Empire, declaring himself Caesar.

Less than six years later, he perished in the White Maple Palace, ending the Fifth Epoch's most legendary piece of history to date.

The more he thought about it, the more he felt that there was more to Roselle's death than what appeared on the surface. It was just like how this famous historical event definitely had power struggles amongst Beyonders behind it, and that a Beyonder faction had leveled the situation, unlike the descriptions in textbooks.

As expected, one of the so-called Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Grimm, died in the Sea of Fog... In a previous diary page, Roselle had written that there was something wrong with this 'horseman.' It seems to have something to do with the tiny island where they discovered many extraordinary beings... Not only was it a fortuitous encounter, but it was also a dangerous one... Klein thought of a previous entry and turned to the fifth page, feeling emotional.

The contents of this page are of little value. They consist of Roselle's comments after drinking an 1128 Aurmir red wine, the disillusion of finding the woman who had gained his adoration in his youth to be aged and out of shape, as well as a degenerate summary of a certain period when he was addicted to playing cards.

The sixth page was about the same as the first one, with accounts of his daily life. However, the last one made Klein's eyes light up.

"8th April, I have to send someone to investigate the Secret Order to get more information. I can't repeat my passiveness from before. I can't let Zaratul lead me by the nose anymore."

So, did you discover anything, Comrade Roselle? Since Klein couldn't find the rest of the information, he could only force himself to calm down and wait for the next gathering when The Hanged Man would hand over another six pages.

He knew that an investigation from over a hundred years ago was unlikely to help him find any clues related to the Secret Order Association. After all, over such a long period of time, other than the special ones, many of the High-Sequence Beyonders would've already died of old age, not to mention the middle or low-level members. However, Klein believed that this would help him obtain inspiration and grasp the precise identity and activity patterns that the Secret Order often used.

Putting down the six diary pages, Klein tapped his right index finger on the edge of the long bronze table, slowly moving his gaze from Miss Justice to The Hanged Man, and then to The Sun.

Right, in the diary just now, there was a line Emperor Roselle described: "God who created all the deities, an omnipotent and omniscient God" This is very similar to the customs of the City of Silver. Where did he hear this from? Could it be from that most ancient and secret organization which controls the world from behind the scenes? This organization was established before the Forsaken Land of God was forsaken?

Hmm... Suddenly, Klein had a new idea. He said with a low and gentle smile, "Roselle mentioned some hidden history in his diary, and mentioned some simple general knowledge. The latter reminded me of something that I don't recall informing you all."

Audrey suddenly fell into a trance. She immediately turned her body around and looked at the very top of the ancient long table in pleasant surprise.

Mr. Fool is taking the initiative to mention the contents of Roselle's diary? What would it say? She was so excited and thrilled that she completely forgot that she was a Spectator.

Compared to her, The Hanged Man, Alger, was much more composed. However, the subconscious straightening of his back heartlessly betrayed him.

Only The Sun, Derek, had always believed that the items of interest to Mr. Fool contained many mysteries, but he didn't know anything about Emperor Roselle and didn't know what this name represented in the Northern Continent. Thus, he just found it difficult to hide his curiosity and didn't reveal any unusual behavior.

"Mr. Fool, did Emperor Roselle mention some general knowledge? I'm willing to pay for this information," Audrey couldn't help but say.

However, I want it to be communicated to me privately! She added silently in her heart.

Klein chuckled and said, "There's no need. This is very simple general knowledge."

"After reading this part of the diary, as the summoner of the Tarot Club, I feel it's necessary to let all of you know this. Of course, I'm very certain that some of you are already aware of this."

He was mainly referring to The Sun. The City of Silver had a history of two to three thousand years, so it was impossible for them to not discover the Law of Beyonder Characteristics

Indestructibility.

Moreover, they were in a relatively extreme environment. Even if the surrounding areas had no lack of monsters in the darkness, there would still be times when they failed to obtain the corresponding materials. In order to pass on their heritage, in order for their city to continue on, using the Beyonder Characteristics of the remains of their predecessors to create a potion wasn't particularly unacceptable.

To them, this was perhaps a sacred and glorious ceremony.

Of course, Klein could see from a previous exchange that The Hanged Man knew something.

It's a pity that Miss Justice cannot always be made to pay in gold pounds and transfer the money to my Blessed. My Blessed can't appear

any less impressive... I mustn't destroy the image of the powerful man that Mr. Azik has created... Yes, I'll give it a try when I have the chance. After all, no matter how powerful a being is, they'll have subordinates that run errands. For instance, the Evernight Goddess's Sleepless... No one would ever suspect that the Evernight Goddess isn't a true deity just because the low-level Nighthawks are weak... Klein sighed silently.

"Thank you very much! Mr. Fool, you are just too generous!" Audrey replied in joy.

She was originally feeling three seconds of regret for the coarse action of using cash to purchase the information.

Klein stopped rapping the table and described with a calm voice, "The first piece of general knowledge—Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility. The characteristics of a Beyonder is never destroyed or reduced. It's only passed from one carrier to the next."

Without realizing it, I used Captain's tone... Klein's lips subconsciously curled upwards.

It cannot be destroyed or reduced. It just transfers from one carrier to another... Audrey ruminated over Mr. Fool's description, feeling that there was too much meaning in that simple sentence.

Her emerald green eyes turned, and when she saw that neither The Hanged Man nor The Sun showed any signs of surprise or contemplation, she immediately understood that these two members of the Tarot Club had long known of this law.

Only I didn't know... She thought, feeling somewhat aggrieved, but she quickly began to praise Mr. Fool for his kindness.

At this point, Klein added, "After a Rampager dies, they will leave behind an item of Beyonder Characteristics. It could be the main ingredient, or it could be a mystical artifact that requires sealing. An ordinary Beyonder's death results in similar results. However, the item left behind will be equivalent to the corresponding potion without the supplementary ingredients. Of course, the item alone will contain Beyonder powers. They can be used as a half-mystical object."

The plain and indifferent words instantly echoed in Audrey's mind. Layers stacked upon layers and, bit by bit, it eventually reached a crescendo.

Audrey thought of cannibalism and the question—would a Sequence pathway be severed if the source of Beyonder materials ceased to exist— she had asked The Hanged Man previously came to mind.

Now, she knew the answer, but she would've rather not heard it. She felt like she was having a nightmare!

How can it be so cruel? Why is it so dark? Audrey had previously seen some bad situations that involved Beyonders, but those situations were only caused by a person's own perverse and evil nature. For example, Mr. A or Qilangos. They didn't affect her yearning and love for mysticism and the Beyonder world.

However, this time, she discovered that the mystical world was filled with grayness and darkness.

Wake up, Audrey, you can't be naive! Consider that the cruelty and darkness described by Mr. Fool are predictable. Since I've chosen this path, I have to bravely walk down it! Audrey consoled herself, easing her mood a little.

She saw that The Hanged Man and the Sun were making only habitual movements and appeared to understand what had just been said.

Hmph! Mr. Hanged Man is terrible. He even wanted to use this information as an exchange previously! Ugh... This information is indeed worth a lot and is quite important, but it's only a simple piece of general knowledge to us and Mr. Fool... Audrey suddenly wanted to laugh a little. Her mood began to improve, and she slowly pushed all the extreme examples that she had just thought of aside.

Klein wasn't surprised by the three members' reaction. He continued in a calm tone, "The second piece of general knowledge—Law of Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation."

Law of Similar Sequence Beyonder Characteristics Conservation... The Hanged Man slightly changed his sitting posture. He felt that he

understood something, but he was unable to fully understand what this law represented and what it consisted of.

Justice and The Sun shared the same feelings as he did. They were unable to directly understand the true meaning behind this law.

“Why Similar Sequence?” Alger couldn’t help asking.

Klein smiled and replied, “What do you wish to pay for the answer?”

One of the ideas he had was that general knowledge was free, but any explanation required a fee. This both matched his status and didn’t waste the information.

Free things cost the most.

Chapter 219: Explanation

If The Fool had simply mentioned that there was some simple general knowledge contained in Roselle's diary, The Hanged Man, Alger, wouldn't necessarily be determined to pay the "price" for the answer, partly because the description of it being "simple" killed his curiosity. Another aspect stemmed from his constant wariness against making trades with The Fool, as it reminded him of the examples when deals were made with evil gods and devils.

But now that he knew the so-called contents of simple general knowledge, his interest was piqued. Yet, he was unable to understand parts of the description, much less gain any actual or deep grasp of the concept. Therefore, he couldn't hold back his urges to ask in absolute reverence, "Mr. Fool, what kind of payment do you want?"

"Yes, yes!" Justice Audrey nodded her head nearly indiscernibly but very frequently, indicating that this was something she wanted to ask as well.

Although The Sun Derrick remained silent and didn't make any additional body gestures, the look he gave to The Fool explained everything.

Klein, who was waiting for a such a response, smiled and said, "Information regarding the Secret Order."

"The Secret Order..." The Hanged Man Alger muttered to himself.

He wasn't unfamiliar with this term. He had once received payment for explaining to Miss Justice about many secret organizations, including the Secret Order.

Audrey and Derrick both frowned subconsciously. The former's only understanding of the Secret Order was limited to what The Hanged Man had described. And the latter had never even heard of such an organization.

Klein had long anticipated what The Sun would feel, but he wasn't surprised. According to his conjecture, the area where the City of Silver was located should've been a part of the Third Epoch after the appearance of the first Blasphemy Slate and before the appearance of

the second Blasphemy Slate. It was even possible that it was the direct catalyst or manifestation of the cataclysm. The Zaratul family had only stepped onto the stage of history in the Fourth Epoch, and the Secret Order was created in the latter half of the Fourth Epoch. There was no way both entities could've existed in the same period.

It would surprise Klein if the Sun were to know about the Secret Order. He would then have to overturn some of his speculations, reconstruct his knowledge of the City of Silver, the Forsaken Land of God, and the Zaratul family.

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Alger looked at The Fool in the gray fog, deliberated his words and said, "I will accept this request and help you gather information regarding the Secret Order.

"Can you make 'payment' in advance?"

It wasn't surprising that a suspected deity was interested in an ancient and secret organization; therefore, Alger wasn't puzzled about it.

More importantly, after many gatherings, he had a guess in his mind, which was that Mr. Fool's state wasn't perfect, that "He" might be in a predicament, that all "His" attempts and the actions of "His" Blessed on the Northern and Southern Continents were to help "Him" break free from "His" confines.

This might even be related to the huge secret of why the seven deities no longer descend upon the real world after the Fourth Epoch... A thought flashed through Alger's mind, and he shuddered as he felt himself entering the realm of the gods.

Upon hearing The Hanged Man's request, Klein leaned back in his chair and nodded.

"No problem.

"If the information you have collected exceeds the value of the answer, I will provide you with further compensation."

As for the circumstances in which the value of the answer was lacking, it is naturally up to the esteemed Mr. Fool to decide. If he has the ability to make the additional payment, so be it. If not, forget it... Klein silently added.

Justice Audrey's eyes lit up all of a sudden. She raised her hand and said, "I want to partake in this deal."

Klein laughed and replied, "Sure."

Frankly speaking, his main target was Miss Justice because she was a local of Backlund and she had mixed herself into several Beyonder circles. Her access to information in the "Land of Hope" far exceeded his, considering it was his first time in the capital. She was also more informed than The Hanged Man who was out at sea most of the time.

According to the earlier revelation he received from his divination, Klein believed that the clues related to the Secret Order would appear in Backlund and not anywhere else.

The Sun Derrick listened quietly and after some thought, said, "I'm willing to use the payment I reserved and exchange it for the answer."

In the previous three-way deal, he had traded the Sequence 8 Telepathist formula for Sequence 9 Bard. Klein had promised to compensate him, and his choice at the time had been to save it up and prepare for the subsequent potion formulas and main ingredients.

Klein nodded his head and gave an explanation that he had long prepared.

"The so-called Similar Sequence refers to how High-Sequence Beyonders are exchangeable with other pathways.

"Let me give an example. The Death pathway's Sequence 5, Gatekeeper, can not only be advanced normally, but one can also choose the Giant pathway, which is the Gatekeeper pathway's Sequence 4, Demon Hunter.

"This won't lead to the danger of losing control, nor will it accumulate madness. It's different from taking the wrong potion.

"Of course, if it's not a similar Sequence, a semi-deranged state is the best result."

"Exchangeable?" Audrey blurted out, surprised and delighted.

She was surprised that Sequence pathways weren't completely fixed, that they didn't need to follow the original path all the way. The price

of switching wasn't being semi-deranged and never to advance again. Within the twenty-two paths of the divine, there were special circumstances and Sequences which were similar!

And what delighted her was that she had another chance to choose again in the future. It was just like being able to select something that caught her interest at Philip's Department Store. It was a wonderful experience!

So that's how it is... Alger silently muttered to himself, suddenly feeling like he had understood several things at once, and he had resolved many of the doubts accumulated in his past experiences.

This information is way too valuable! As expected of Mr. Fool. Socalled simple general knowledge is enough to shock and awe most Low-Sequence Beyonders and benefit them immensely. He sighed inwardly.

Derrick the Sun was a little disappointed because he had no intention of changing Sequences. He wanted to be the Sun that lit up the darkness and dispelled the curse.

However, he quickly recalled an incident that happened in the City of Silver:

The former Chief, a powerhouse who had the greatest possibility of breaking past the limitations of Demon Hunter, had built a mausoleum for himself and went deep inside, making it his home.

Afterwards, he appeared less and less, until the main door of the mausoleum could no longer be opened.

Back then, the citizens of the City of Silver all believed that a problem had arisen during the Chief's advancement and that he had gone mad, to the point of being close to losing control. He was believed to have finished himself off.

Now, combined with the description from The Fool, The Sun suddenly thought of another possibility.

That Chief might've been attempting to advance in Sequence through a similar pathway!

In one of his explorations deep into the darkness, he had acquired the corresponding formula for the Death pathway, and the mausoleum might have been a special requirement... But in the end, he still failed? But why didn't he turn into a monster? What did he encounter in that dark mausoleum?

The City of Silver doesn't have the subsequence Sequence potion formulas after Demon Hunter?

As these thoughts crossed his mind, Derrick was suddenly jolted back to his senses by Miss Justice's reserved voice.

"Mr. Fool, may I ask what other pathways are exchangeable with the Spectator Sequencer pathway?"

Sequence 4 Demon Hunter sounds pretty good... That's very suitable for me, very suitable for 'Justice!' Audrey admired the first High-Sequence name that she knew.

I want to know too... Klein was tempted to answer Miss Justice's question in such a manner.

Before he could say anything, Audrey added in a faltering tone, "I-I can pay for the answer to this question. H-how many gold pounds do you think is enough? I-I believe that your Blessed will need a certain amount of funds for their activities..."

Having said that, she recalled how Mr. Fool's Blessed had easily finished Pirate Admiral Qilangos who possessed Creeping Hunger. Clearly, he was a High-Sequence Beyonder, so she nearly said, "I apologize. Mr. Fool, treat it as though I never said a thing."

However, since she had already asked, she couldn't back down! *Come on, Audrey! Perhaps The Fool has a weaker Blessed?* Audrey quietly bit at her lips, silently encouraging herself.

Gold pounds? Klein thought about it seriously and said, "We'll make the transaction after enough information about the Secret Order is gathered."

As he spoke, he recalled his informant in the Psychology Alchemists, Daxter Guderian.

Captain and I-I... Sigh... Daxter's identity as an informant can no longer be verified. I wonder if it's a tragedy or a comedy... It's a pity that I can no longer contact him anymore. Otherwise, it would be the most convenient way to obtain the information regarding the Spectator pathway from him... Klein smirked.

"Alright." Audrey answered happily.

The conversation between the two made The Hanged Man, who was about to ask a similar question, shut his mouth. He left it until he had gathered enough information on the Secret Order.

After a brief silence, Audrey turned her head to look at Mr. Fool and raised her hand very slightly.

After receiving a nod of confirmation, she turned to the member opposite her and asked with a sense of anticipation, "Mr. Hanged Man, my tip allowed you to finish Vice Admiral Hurricane. Have you prepared the complete pituitary gland of a mature Rainbow Salamander?"

That's one of the reasons why I returned to the sea... Alger nodded gently and said, "I've gotten the Beyonder material you wanted.

"But how should I give it to you?"

How? How should it be given to me... Audrey froze for a moment as she lost herself in thought.

It's impossible to just give my address... Nor can I go through Xio and Fors. That will reveal the fact that I'm a Beyonder... Hmm, it's not impossible. Emperor Roselle once said that when we should choose the lesser of two evils...

At that moment, Klein's heart stirred. He lightly tapped the edge of the long table and smiled.

"Miss, Sir, are you willing to cooperate with me in making an attempt regarding this matter?"

"Attempt?" Justice was instantly thrilled as she nodded her, acting reserved and elegant.

"I'm very willing to cooperate."

As a Spectator, she clearly remembered that Mr. Fool had only used the word "attempt" on two things. The first time involved bringing her and The Hanged Man into this mysterious space, and the second time was when they were given an honorary name so that they could attempt to make a prayer. And the outcome was sufficiently successful, revealing "His" true nature.

What would it be this time? It really is something to look forward to! Audrey restrained her impatience and tried her best to behave as a qualified Spectator.

Attempt... Alger suddenly tensed up, viewing The Fool's proposal with utmost wariness.

What does "He" want to do? What is "His" true purpose? Is this good or bad for me? One by one, thoughts popped up in his mind. The rapidly rotting appearance of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos surfaced in Alger's mind.

Finally, he lowered his head and respectfully replied, "Your wish is my wish."

Beside him, Derrick looked at The Hanged Man, and then at Justice, wondering why they were so sensitive to this so-called "attempt."

Klein lightly tapped his fingers on the edge of the long bronze table and smiled.

"This attempt will make your transaction easier and safer, and it will definitely be sufficiently confidential."

He turned his head to the side and looked at The Hanged Man. He said with a moderate pace, "Do you remember the sacrificial ritual described by The Sun?"

Klein had deliberately mentioned it to show how open he was. It made it difficult for the members of the Tarot Club to imagine that the

sacrificial ritual he was about to provide had actually first been obtained from The Sun and that he had gone through all that time and effort back then to trick The Sun out of a template sacrificial ritual.

"I remember. I do come into contact with such things usually," Alger answered truthfully, but his heart was throbbing.

Since the orthodox gods rarely responded to similar rituals, the word "sacrifice" had often been equated to evil gods and devils in the Fifth Epoch!

Thinking about how this could lead to a terrifying outcome, The Hanged Man felt as if he was walking at the edge of the abyss. If he wasn't careful, he would fall in, only to be eroded and devoured.

Klein followed his plans and didn't provide further explanations. He nodded slightly and said, "My idea is for you to sacrifice the Beyonder material to me through the ritual and I'll bestow them to Miss Justice. A transaction like this will be beneficial for both of you."

That can be done? Audrey was instantly dumbfounded. She felt that this exceeded the limits of her imagination.

But she very quickly came to her senses and understood the advantages of this method and the true nature of a deity hidden behind this simple act!

Mr. Fool is great! As expected, our Tarot Club will be different from the other secret organizations! We'll use the method of deities to exchange for material goods and ingredients! Audrey almost said "Praise the Lady" in her mind out of habit, but in the end, she said, "Praise Mr. Fool" instead.

Alger turned even warier as he entered a state of calm thoughts.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, what do I need to do?"

He tried to figure out the true purpose of The Fool from the process of the sacrificial ritual.

Klein lightly pressed his right hand and said, "Like I said, this is only an attempt. It might not succeed, so it will need your cooperation.

“First of all, prepare an altar. There’s no need to make it too complicated; it can be very simple and crude. The only requirement is to engrave or draw this symbol.”

As he spoke, a screen of light appeared in front of him. On it was the symbol of the hidden “Pupil-less Eye” and the mysterious symbol of the partial Contorted Lines; the same symbol on the back of The Fool’s chair.

After previous experiments without using materials with spirituality, Klein was certain that the sacrificial ritual he designed could create an illusory gate above the gray fog, similar to the Door of Summoning. However, his strength alone couldn’t construct a stable channel, and he could only use the uniqueness of the mysterious space above the gray fog to complete the sacrifice.

Therefore, he was 90% confident that the ritual would be successful. The only problem was if an ordinary passageway could be constructed using ordinary materials that contained spirituality or did it need to be Beyonder materials as well as a sufficient number of them.

I’ll let Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man bear the cost of this experiment... In any case, they knew from the very beginning that the Tarot Club was a product of an attempt. It can be foreseen that there would be other attempts subsequently and failure is inevitable. Even deities are no exception... Klein decided to transfer the costs.

As The Hanged Man, Justice, and the Sun were attempting to memorize the symbol, Klein chuckled.

“If you forget, you can pray to me, and then you can ‘remember.’” “Alright,” Audrey answered happily.

With Mr. Fool, rituals aren’t tedious and troublesome! she thought happily.

The Hanged Man nodded in response as Klein continued the description.

> “Secondly, follow the normal procedure, but there’s no need to burn any more additional herbs or apply the holy oil. There’s no restriction on time, just chanting my name is enough.

"Remember, use ancient Hermes or Jotun to recite this piece of prayer.

"Your devoted servant prays for your attention, "I pray for you to take his offerings.

"I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.

"After you finish chanting, combine the materials that contain spirituality with the natural power created by the incantation, and await my response.

"If you don't succeed in this step, change from materials containing spirituality to Beyonder materials, and try again from the beginning."

After listening quietly to the procedure, Alger felt that his previous guess was very likely to be the truth.

The Fool was in a predicament!

He offered alluring attempts, making attempts one step at a time and planned to use himself, Justice, and The Sun to slowly break free of the restrictions. In the end, he might even descend into the real world!

This was also the true reason why "He" had initially pulled people into this mysterious space, agreeing to the establishment of the Tarot Club!

Even without this previous speculation, Alger believed that he would've come to the same conclusion after hearing of the experimental procedures required after the sacrificial ritual and comparing it with The Fool's previous attempts.

The only thing that stumped him was the possession of a powerful Blessed; therefore, there was no need for him to use himself, Justice, and The Sun. His Blessed could make similar attempts.

There must be secrets I don't know about yet... The attempts need to be sufficiently secretive. And perhaps "His" Blessed is being watched by certain existences? Alger began connecting the dots.

After Klein finished describing the ritual, he asked in a low but gentle voice, "The sacrificial ritual needs a specific time. Mr. Hanged Man, when do you plan on making the attempt?"

This was different from responding to a request which could have a delayed response. The stable passage created by the sacrificial ritual could only exist for a very short period of time, so Klein had to wait above the gray fog ahead of time.

"The Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland is the only Beyonder material I have with me for the time being. As for materials with spirituality, I do have quite a lot... Mr. Fool, once the gathering ends, I'll immediately attempt the first scenario. If it fails, I'll seek out other Beyonder materials. Once I obtain anything, I'll inform you by praying to confirm a time," Alger said as he couldn't help but turn his gaze towards Miss Justice.

As a Spectator, Audrey instantly understood what he meant. She answered without the slightest hesitation, "If any additional Beyonder materials are required, I'll compensate you afterward. Well... I can't guarantee the specific type of material you would want."

As expected of the wealthy Miss Justice... The Fool—Klein— couldn't help but sigh before chuckling.

"We have come to an agreement."

He looked at Justice and said after some thought, "Once Mr. Hanged Man's attempt succeeds, I'll inform you of the bestowment ritual."

"Alright!" Audrey was entirely confident with Mr. Fool's abilities.

After answering the question, a sudden thought struck her as she realized that the exchange of money could also be done through this method. Of course, this was only if the attempt was a success.

I wonder if items without any spirituality would work or not... I'll ask Mr. Fool again after the attempt is successful... Audrey's lips curled as she thought of the beautiful future.

With the sacrifice and bestowment topic coming to an end, she deliberated for a few seconds before saying, "Mr. Fool, I've found two ladies suitable for our Tarot Club. They're both Beyonders and have their own circle and resources in Backlund. They're also able to keep a secret and have decent personalities. Are you willing to let them join the gathering?"

Does Justice want to strengthen her faction within the Tarot Club? This was the most instinctual thought that Alger had.

Derrick was very interested in this matter as he looked sideways at Mr. Fool, waiting for his answer in anticipation.

Klein appeared to be in a bit of a dilemma. Previously, he had imagined that the members of the Tarot Club wouldn't know each other, and they would then develop their own subordinates, forming a relatively tight and secretive organization.

This way, even if a certain member was exposed, captured, or had their spirit channeled, it wouldn't have much of an impact on the Tarot Club.

But Miss Justice's description just happened to hit his weak spot. He was hoping to find clues regarding the Secret Order and Lanevus by acquainting himself with Beyonders with different circles and resources in Backlund.

If it's done through Justice, the person involved would eventually hold back... However, I'm not sure if it's possible to pull them up above the gray fog simply by reciting my name... In order to maintain his image, Klein didn't think too much and instead procrastinated on it.

He said calmly, "It will require a certain amount of examination.

"Miss Justice, use a clandestine method that wouldn't expose yourself to let them know of my name to garner interest in them."

When Audrey saw that her proposal was about to be accepted, she immediately responded in excitement, "Yes, Mr. Fool!"

After a few more exchanges, the gathering came to an end. The Sun, The Hanged Man, and Justice returned, while Klein remained in the gray fog, waiting for the sacrifice.

Chapter 221: The Tarot Club at a Higher Level

The Blue Avenger was like a leaf on the surface of the undulating waves of the Sonia Sea. At times, it was raised high and sometimes low from the ebbing of the waves, but there was no sign of it being at risk of capsizing.

Alger Wilson stood in the captain cabin, his back to the shelves of red and white wine, as he subconsciously paced around.

Finally, he gritted his teeth and returned to the mahogany desk with a grim expression. He removed the brass sextant, found a piece of paper and a pen, and leaned over to draw the complex, mysterious symbol given to him by The Fool.

With a Seafarer's memory, Alger quickly completed the first step of the sacrificial ritual.

Then, he opened the drawer and took out a candle. He set up the ritual according to the dualism principles and placed a candle above the symbol that was formed by the combination of the Pupil-less Eye and the partial Contorted Lines. One candle was placed in the middle that represented the person making the sacrifice.

After cleaning up all the items on the table, Alger condensed pure water in the palm of his hand and wiped the altar clean. He then used the silver dagger from the ceremony to create a sealing wall that surrounded his desk.

After doing all this, he used his spirituality to light up the two candles and retreated a few steps under the dim light.

Taking a deep breath, Alger lowered his head and recited in ancient Hermes,

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"Your devoted servant prays for your attention, "I pray for you to take his offerings.

“I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.”

...

This ancient incantation reverberated within the wall of spirituality, stirring up spiraling gales as they swept forth with the force of nature.

It was the oldest sacrificial language created by human Beyonders, and it contained many mysteries itself. However, it lacked sufficient protection for the user.

Bearing with the pain that was akin to having knives slicing across his skin, Alger took out a small dark brown glass bottle from his pocket, unscrewed the lid, and poured out a lot of sesame-shaped granules.

These granules swirled with a metallic luster and exuded an indescribable sense of beauty.

Alger scattered these granules into the wind.

Whoosh!

The gale grew stronger but was no longer tempestuous. It was dyed in two separate colors—silver and black.

As they continued to collide and mix, the two differently-colored winds were infused into the candle flame that symbolized The Fool, burgeoning and tearing open an illusory ordinary-sized door. Its surface was carved with the same symbol that Alger had drawn.

At this moment, Klein witnessed the appearance of the hazy door behind his high-back chair. He could feel the spirituality in the air that was rippling apart and stimulating the mysterious space.

It seems to be working... Klein suddenly had a premonition and immediately spread out his spirituality, infusing it with upheavals and stimulation.

Creak!

Amidst the insubstantial sounds, the blurry door slowly opened!

In the captain cabin, Alger suddenly saw the illusory door, formed out of wind and light, open. Behind it was deep darkness formed from an innumerable number of almost invisible shadows. They were lustrous

splendors encompassing massive amounts of knowledge. Situated above them was the thick gray fog with the ancient palace overlooking the real world.

Such a scene caused Alger to involuntarily tremble. It was a deep fear, an indescribable excitement.

He hurriedly picked up the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland that he had long prepared. He held it with both hands, and, with his head bowed, he raised the palm-sized object which was constantly changing in color and had a soft feel to the ridges to the illusory door.

Alger's hands grew lighter under the sudden appearance and instant disappearance of a suction force. He lost the slight tingling sensation that the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland gave him.

He didn't dare raise his head until he heard the deep voice of The Fool echoing in his ears.

"You did well."

"It's my honor," Alger answered without any hesitation.

He looked ahead again, only to see that the illusory door had disappeared. The gale had stopped, and the candle flames had returned to their original state.

After the candles were extinguished according to the normal procedures, Alger sat down with a complicated expression and said to himself silently, *In the beginning, only people could be pulled into the world above the gray fog... After a while, responses could be made by listening to prayers... Now, sacrifices and bestowment can be performed... Mr. Fool is freeing himself from his predicament one step at a time, and bit by bit, will he enter the real world?*

This guess or conclusion frightened and worried Alger, but he also felt a bit of delight.

At least I'm a member of the Tarot Club—one of the earliest members... He sighed.

...

In the majestic palace above the gray fog, Klein was playing with the pituitary gland of the Rainbow Salamander. Various colors were reflected on his face as they constantly changed colors.

A slight tingling sensation came from his palm, and a strong sense of accomplishment filled his heart, causing him to reveal a genuine smile.

In the future, the Tarot Club will become even more miraculous... After reflecting over the situation, Klein extended his spirituality and sent his will to the crimson star representing Miss Justice.

After returning to her bedroom, Audrey was no longer able to sit quietly on the edge of the bed. She would restlessly flip through the books by her bed and from time to time, scrutinize herself in the mirror with an unfocused gaze.

She was looking forward to the completion of The Hanged Man's sacrificial ritual, but she was also afraid that the result would be a failure.

Emperor Roselle had said that one must remain calm and collected when important matters arise... Audrey, come on, take a deep breath... Or perhaps, I should go tease the dog? However, Susie can talk and think, so she's an entity with her own dignity. I can't just casually tease her... Audrey's mind wandered, her hand unconsciously wringing an ornate doll dressed in splendid clothing.

After an unknown period of time, a thick gray fog suddenly appeared before her eyes, and in the depths of the fog, there was a lofty chair.

Sitting there, The Fool said with a smile, "Miss Justice, the attempt was successful. Have you prepared the materials that contain spirituality?"

That's great! As expected of Mr Fool! Audrey forgot The Hanged

Man's role in this matter. She held back her excitement and said, "Yes, I always have such materials with me."

Audrey had been the same even before she joined the Tarot Club, but back then, she didn't know which materials could be considered to contain spirituality. She had merely moved them from the family

treasury in accordance with the various essential oil formulas she had gathered.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “When do you plan on holding the ritual?

“This is based on the premise that there are no Beyonders around you.”

Does a Beyonder dog count... Audrey looked at the tightly-shut door, feeling a small tug at her conscience.

“I can do it now.”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“The ritual’s process is the same as I described previously. All you need to do is change the prayer to—

“Your devoted servant prays for your attention, “I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom.

“I pray for you to give me strength.

“In addition to this, use the dualism method.”

Audrey thought it over, fighting the urge to nod, and she began preparing for the ritual.

When the illusory door opened, and a scene even more illusory than the cosmos appeared, Audrey felt intoxicated in both body and mind.

This is the mysterious world I’ve always been pursuing. This is the kind of feeling I’ve always wanted! She praised Mr. Fool wholeheartedly.

It’s faith towards the Goddess, but for The Fool, it’s worship.

Audrey silently explained herself in her mind.

Soon after, she was stunned to see that there was something on the “altar.” It was a soft object with lustrous color and was filled with ridges.

“The Rainbow Salamander’s pituitary gland!” Audrey felt a surge of joy in her heart. Her eyes lit up as she had the urge to step forward and grab it.

However, her customs of etiquette took hold of her as she sincerely praised Mr. Fool once again.

After finishing the ritual, she impatiently walked forward and carefully examined the Beyonder material five times.

Our Tarot Club is at a higher level than all the other secret organizations... Audrey secretly felt smug.

She then glanced warily at the door, as if afraid of Susie's sudden intrusion.

She had to redouble her efforts and immediately concoct the potion to complete her advancement!

A few minutes later, she held a bottle of liquid that contained constantly changing lusters that could shine to the bottom of everyone's hearts.

She confidently drank the Telepathist potion and successfully tide through the integration stage with the Beyonder characteristics, achieving an advancement.

The view before her seemed to clear up significantly, with a great increase in other aspects. Audrey familiarly used

Cogitation to restrain the dissipating spirituality.

After her Sequence stabilized, she smiled and walked briskly to the door, letting in the golden retriever. She saw the obvious suspicion on Susie's face.

"You took far longer than usual." Susie didn't hide her thoughts.

Audrey sat down on an ottoman and dryly laughed before changing the subject.

"Susie, tell me—how should I secretly inform Xio and Fors about a particular matter without revealing myself; yet get them interested?"

Before she finished her sentence, Audrey had begun to seriously ponder over the mission Mr. Fool had assigned her.

Then, she looked at Susie, and Susie looked back at her. The human and dog both fell into deep thought at the same moment.

...

After completing his goal, Klein returned to reality, slept for a little more than an hour before hurrying out the door. He spent a pound to buy a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, wigs, and a variety of mustaches that could be torn off and stuck on with adhesives. They were disguises he would need later.

Before dinner, he made a trip to East Borough, the most crowded area and the most unsafe part of the city. He rented a onebedroom house at the rent of four soli, three pence a week. He paid two weeks rent and a deposit, coming up to a total of 17 solis.

Only then did Klein complete all his early preparations. East Borough also left a deep impression on him. Most of the streets here were the same as Tingen's Lower Street, but the area that shared the traits was many times larger.

The clothes of the residents here were old but decent. Many of them were dressed in shabby clothes with sallow skin and thin frames. It was as though they would turn into beasts at any moment due to their hunger or poverty. Therefore, gangs ran rampant in East Borough.

When he got back to Cherwood Borough, Klein felt as if he had entered heaven from hell.

For the next two days, he experimented with using his spirituality to perform the rituals and create charms. He no longer prayed to the Goddess and waited for the effects of his tiny advertisements to bear fruit.

On Thursday morning, Klein finally heard the doorbell ring.

Chapter 222: The First Job

Ding! Dong! A rope was being tugged, causing the doorbell and the sound it made to constantly tinkle and send its sound echoing throughout the spacious but relatively empty living room.

Klein, who was seated on the sofa reading a newspaper to study the various investment opportunities, stood up. He was wearing a white shirt and a black vest without a bow tie, just like what one would wear at home.

The first job in my career as a detective? But I can't always be at home, waiting for a mission to arrive. Yes... I need to hang a notice on the door, along with a fountain pen, so that clients can write down the time of their next visit and allow me to prepare in advance... However, for a new detective in this profession, without any fame, doing so would basically be the same as not having a "next time"... Sigh, I can only go through the trouble of performing a divination in the morning to see if I would receive any jobs for the day. And if so, what time so as to make plans... Of course, it's also possible that I would miss out on missions from powerful Beyonders. Well, so be it, it might be a good thing after all...

He walked to the door, and without looking through the peephole, the image of the visitors outside appeared in his mind:

One of them was an old lady in a black plush hat. Her back was slightly hunched, and her face was deeply wrinkled. Her skin was shriveled and sallow, but her dark dress was very formal and neat.

Her temples were completely white, but her blue eyes were quite lively. She was looking at the young man beside her, gesturing for him to pull the doorbell again.

The young man was in his twenties, with eyes similar to those of the old lady's. In the progressively cold weather, he wore a black double-breasted coat, a half top hat, and a bow tie like he was about to attend a banquet, it was as if he wouldn't relax his demands of himself at any moment.

With the help of a Clown's premonition, Klein turned the handle, opened the door, and greeted his visitors with a smile before the bell could ring again.

"Good morning, Madam, Sir. What a wonderful day it is, at least up to this point for I have already seen the sun for five minutes."

He spoke of the weather in a slightly exaggerated manner, small talk that had been popular in Backlund for more than a century.

"Yes, it's always shy and doesn't come out from behind the fog and the dark clouds." The old lady nodded in agreement.

By her side, the lad asked, "Are you Detective Sherlock Moriarty?"

"Yes, and what may I help you with? I'm sorry, please come in. Let's sit down and talk." Klein turned his body to the side, making way for his guests as he pointed to the guest area.

"No, there's no need. I don't want to waste any time. My poor Brody is still waiting for me to save it!" the old lady said with a rather sharp voice.

"It?" Klein noticed the most important pronoun and suddenly had a bad feeling.

The very formally dressed young man nodded and said, "Brody is a cat owned by my grandmother, Madam Doris. He went missing last night, and I hope you can help us find him. We live at the end of this street, and I'm willing to pay you 5 soli for it. Of course, if you can prove that you've spent more time and effort than that, I'll make it up to you."

Find a cat? The reason why you're entrusting me with this job is simply because of the convenience stemming from how we live on the same street... Klein felt that this wasn't the detective career that he had imagined.

It makes me look like a clown... Well, I can't turn down my first business deal. This is a seer's point of view... He pondered for a few seconds and asked, "Can you describe it in detail?"

Granny Doris spoke out before the young man could open his mouth.

“Brody is a lovely, lively black cat. It’s very healthy, has beautiful green eyes, and loves to eat cooked chicken breast. Goddess, last night, he ran off just like that. No, it must’ve gotten lost. I’ve placed lots of chicken breast in its bowl, but it refuses to return to take a look.

... Klein’s lips curved up and said, “I’m very satisfied with your description, Mrs. Doris.”

“I accept this request. Alright, let’s go to your home now. I need to search for clues and find traces. You should be clear that the basis of my reasoning lies in the details.” Mrs. Doris didn’t consult her grandson as she nodded and said, “You’re the most proactive detective I’ve ever seen. It’s a deal!”

Klein put on his coat and hat, picked up his cane, and followed Madam Doris and her grandson out onto the street.

Unlike Tingen, roads in many parts of Backlund had been rebuilt with cement or asphalt. Even during a downpour, the roads were less muddy.

While the old lady was leading the way, his grandson came close to Klein and said in a low voice, “I hope you’ll do your best to find Brody. It’s been one of the pillars of my grandmother’s life ever since my grandfather and parents passed away.”

“After Brody went missing, something went wrong with my grandmother’s mind, so much so that she’s started hearing things. She keeps telling me that she hears poor Brody mewing miserably.”

Klein immediately nodded and said, “I’ll do my best. Right, I still haven’t gotten your name.”

“Jurgen, Jurgen Cooper, a senior solicitor,” the young man replied.

Soon, they reached 58 Minsk Street and entered the dark house.

“This is Brody’s bowl. This is his favorite box. He always sleeps here.” Doris’s wrinkled face was filled with worry and expectation.

Klein squatted down and found several strands of black cat fur in the box.

He straightened up and gripped his silver-inlaid cane with the hand that held the cat's fur.

Klein's gaze turned deep as he pretended to observe his surroundings as he silently recited a divination sentence.

His hand secretly slipped from the end of the cane but didn't leave it completely. It just made it difficult for Jurgen or Doris to notice that the cane was standing on its own.

Soon after, the black silver-inlaid cane tilted to the side. It fell very slowly, with very little movement.

Klein gripped the cane again, looked in that direction, and observed it for more than ten seconds.

Then, he strode over to an old cupboard.

"Any signs of Brody running away?" Jurgen asked with concern. The old lady, Doris, was also waiting for an answer.

Without answering, Klein kneeled and pulled open the door at the bottom of the cupboard.

Meow!

A black cat darted out, tail high, and ran for its bowl.

"Brody... When did you get into the cupboard? How did you get locked in there?" Mrs. Doris cried, surprised and confused.

Jurgen turned his head in surprise and looked at Klein.

"How did you know it was in the cupboard?"

Klein smiled, and replied in a deep voice, "Deduction, my good man."

...

After obtaining the 5 soli reward from Mrs. Doris and Jurgen, as well as their friendship, Klein returned to 15 Minsk Street under the gloomy weather.

Before he even got close, he saw a figure loitering in front of his door.

More business? When Klein looked over, he saw that the visitor was a boy of fifteen or sixteen, dressed in an old coat and a round hat that didn't fit his age.

It's him? Klein immediately recognized him as the boy he had met on the steam train the day he had arrived in Backlund. Back then, he was being pursued, but his maturity and calmness at the time had left quite a deep impression on Klein.

What would he want to entrust me with... As he wondered, Klein walked over and smiled.

"Excuse me, are you looking for me?"

The teenage boy was startled as he quickly turned around, his bright red eyes filled with unconcealable fear.

He composed himself and asked hesitantly, "Are you Detective Sherlock Moriarty?"

"Yes." Klein looked around and said, "Let's talk inside." "Alright." The teenage boy didn't refuse.

Inside, Klein didn't take off his coat, but he did take off his hat and put his cane away.

He led the teenage boy to the guest area, pointed at the long sofa and said, "Please, have a seat. How might I address you? What job do you have for me?"

"You can call me Ian," the teenage boy surveyed his surroundings and fell silent for a few seconds. "I was previously hired by another detective, Mr. Zreal Viktor Lee, who helped me gather some news and information."

Klein sat down, clasped his hands, and said, "Does the job have anything to do with your former employer?"

"Yes," Ian nodded solemnly. "A few days ago I suddenly found myself being followed, by someone with ill intentions; therefore, I thought of a way to lose their tail... Uh... I believe you saw this scene yourself, Mr. Moriarty. I recognized you as the man who was sizing me up on the metro that day as soon as I saw you." *...This level of observational*

skills isn't any worse than a Spectator's... Could it be that he was born with a special ability? Or is he a Beyonder? Klein activated his Spirit Vision and looked at Ian, but he didn't find anything strange.

He nodded and calmly replied, "Your response left an impression on me."

Ian didn't harp on the topic and continued, "I suspect that my encounter has something to do with Mr. Zreal, so I went to visit him at his place. I found the place seemingly normal, but there were many hints that indicated that someone had infiltrated and triggered all the tiny mechanisms.

"I haven't seen Mr. Zreal since that day. I suspect that something has happened to him.

"I tried to call the police, but his disappearance period has yet to reach the required number of days to make the request. I tried to get help from other detectives that I knew, but all of them turned me down, on the grounds that they had just met Mr. Zreal at a fellow detective's party.

"That surprised me because I didn't receive any response from Mr. Zreal when I contacted him using the agreed upon method.

"I still stood by my judgment and intended to ask for the help of a detective whom Mr. Zreal doesn't know. Well, as such, that meant it would be someone I don't know either. I had no idea who to look for as well. Therefore, I could only search through the newspapers and ended up finding you, Mr. Sherlock Moriarty."

Klein asked after listening carefully, “So you suspect that the Zreal whom the detectives saw was someone in disguise?”

Holding his brown round hat, Ian replied as if he had already thought about it, “It’s a possibility, but I think it’s too difficult due to the huge risks involved. The party was at night, and it’s true that the lights weren’t very bright*—*but most of the people attending are detectives, detectives with keen observational skills. Just a wig, beard, or cosmetics can hardly hide from their eyes.”

Perhaps some Beyonder powers can do it... Just like how Creeping Hunger enables such an ability... There was a little trap in Klein’s question. He wished to determine from the teenage boy’s answer, the expression on his face, and his body language to determine if he had ever come into contact with Beyonders, or if he knew things about mysticism.

The initial answer was no.

When Ian saw Detective Moriarty nodding slightly in agreement with his reasoning, he continued, “I believe that the detectives saw Mr. Zreal, but he wasn’t free. He was in a controlled state in which he couldn’t send out distress signals. The reason why he wasn’t responding to my attempts to liaison with him is to probably signal to me that he needs help.”

“A reasonable explanation.” Klein released his clasped hands and sat back a little, making himself look more relaxed and confident.

Ian fell silent for about ten seconds before he said seriously, “I’d like to entrust you with the task of investigating Mr. Zreal and determine his current condition. All I need is confirmation.”

Considering that Ian was a semi-professional who had gathered intelligence and information for a detective, Klein had the intention to make his acquaintance. He smiled and said, “Then how much are you going to pay? You should be well aware that this may be very dangerous.”

Ian looked down at the pocket of his old coat and said after some deliberation, “There are two ways. The first, I can directly give you a payment that’s enough to satisfy you. Afterward, regardless of whether the mission is simple or difficult, that will be all unless you suffer a relatively serious injury.

“Secondly, I could pay you five pounds in advance, and when you finish the job, you can add on to the bill depending on the difficulty of the matter. But it’s easy to cause a dispute, even if there’s a contract.”

Klein pretended to be in thought and after almost thirty seconds, he said in a low voice, “Why don’t we do it this way? You can pay me five pounds in advance and help me with three things after the mission is completed. Don’t worry, they won’t be anything difficult. They will be within your capabilities, and it won’t make you feel too uncomfortable. This can be agreed upon in the contract.”

Ian knitted his brows before standing up. He leaned forward and stretched out his right hand.

“Alright!”

Klein shook hands with him, pulled out a standard contract that he had prepared, picked up a round fountain pen, added all the details he had discussed, and stamped it with his fingerprint.

After signing the contract, he gave the teenage boy, Ian, a stack of white paper and watched him write Detective Zreal’s relevant information.

After a while, he browsed through the information and casually asked, “How can I contact you if there’s an emergency, or if I’ve confirmed Zreal’s condition?”

Ian pursed his lips and remained silent for quite a while. Only when Klein looked over did he reply in a somewhat stiff manner, “You don’t need to contact me. I will appear at the right time.”

Without another word, he took out a thick stack of cash from the pocket of his old coat. They seemed to be stacked up in a very neat order, from high face value to low face value.

Ian pulled out three one-pound notes from the bottom, counted six five-soli notes, and finally ten one-soli notes.

When Klein saw that Ian had neatly arranged the notes, with even the portraits of the former kings facing up without a single mistake, Klein suddenly felt a bit frustrated.

This is some late-stage obsessive-compulsive disorder... He silently exhaled and received the payment from Ian.

According to his visual estimate, Ian had less than three pounds left.

He probably had all his savings with him... If I had asked for more, would he bail on me without paying? He doesn't look like the kind of person to do so, but one shouldn't judge a book by its cover... Klein folded the bills at random and stuffed them into his pocket, ignoring the untidiness. As such, he succeeded in seeing Ian's slightly twisted expression.

"I'll try to complete the investigation as soon as possible." Klein stood up and held out his hand as a gesture of bidding him farewell.

"Thank you for your help." Ian thanked him sincerely because the counteroffer was obviously a "discount."

Watching the boy who was more mature than his age leave, Klein stroked his chin and silently said to himself, *This matter goes deeper than it seems.*

Ian didn't mention anything about Zreal's recent investigations or what information he had been instructed to gather...

Forget it. I'll handle as much as the money is worth. All I need to do is confirm Zreal's current condition.

He turned around and walked back into the living room. While doing so, he fished a quarter pence out of his trouser pocket.

Ping!

As the copper coin tumbled in the air, Klein's eyes turned dark as he muttered if there were any Beyonder elements in the case he was handling.

Then, he opened his right hand and tried to catch the copper penny.

Clang! The coin slipped from his fingertips and fell to the ground, rolling away.

This result meant that the divination had failed.

From the looks of it, Ian has withheld more things than I thought... The information is so lacking that I can't even obtain a vague divination result... He pursed his lips, took a few steps forward, and bent down to pick up the coin.

...

That night, in the wee hours of the morning, at 138 Rose Street, Backlund Bridge.

Klein had changed into a cheap light-blue workman's outfit. His mouth, chin, and cheeks were covered with a black beard that, at first glance, made him look rough and savage.

He wore a dark-colored cap and pressed it so low that it nearly covered his eyes.

Such caps originated from the Intis Republic hunters. There were certain differences from the traditional deer-hunting caps the Loen Kingdom hunters wore. However, such caps had become popular among the lower-class populace of Backlund.

Hiding in the shadows of an Intis parasol tree by the side of the road, Klein studied the house across the street with the aid of the elegant gas lamps.

It was Zreal's home.

The detective was from Southville. His parents, relatives, and friends were all there, and he had come to Backlund alone where he slowly forged a name for himself.

He was still a bachelor and had only hired two temporary maids, the kind that came by every three days to clean up the place, without needing to provide them with food or lodging.

At the moment, the terrace house he rented was pitch dark.

Klein took off the silver chain inside his sleeve and let the topaz pendant hang down naturally.

"There's danger inside. "There's
danger inside."

...

After repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and saw the spirit pendulum spinning clockwise, but very slowly.

"There's danger, but it's nothing serious," Klein muttered, and once again confirmed that he had his tarot cards, self-made charms, and Holy Night Powder on him.

After doing all this, he looked around, and taking advantage of the stillness of the night, he nimbly rushed across the street.

There was no veranda, garden, or lawn as it directly faced the edge of the street. Klein went around to the side and easily climbed up the water pipe to the small balcony on the second floor where clothes could be hung out to dry.

Immediately following that, he took out a tarot card and slid it through the crack, opening the door to the corridor.

Following Ian's drawing of the house's layout, Klein walked almost soundlessly to Zreal's bedroom.

He lightly tapped his left molar and activated his Spirit Vision. Through the wooden door, he looked inside.

Spirit Vision could see aura colors through obstacles without spirituality. However, it was highly dependent on one's abilities. Currently, Klein was able to observe through wooden doors but was stumped by concrete walls. Furthermore, the scenes he could see weren't too clear.

In his vision, he saw three humanoid auras in the bedroom behind the door. The colors were blurry and were located in different locations.

There are three people lying in ambush... Is it to capture Ian, or someone else? The bedroom isn't that big... Klein stood in the darkness, calmly considering the results of his observations.

At that moment, he suddenly retreated towards the balcony while keeping his footsteps very light.

Back at the balcony, Klein took a thin silver slice from his pocket.

This was a Slumber Charm that he had created in an attempt during the afternoon.

He didn't pray to the Evernight Goddess, but to himself instead. He held a ritual in the name of "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck" before entering the world above the gray fog to respond.

Since this method was difficult to mobilize the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, Klein could only use his own spirituality to "respond." The charms that he made in the end were worse than normal, but better than the ones he made in his own name.

After surveying his surroundings again, Klein covered his mouth and whispered a word in ancient Hermes.

"Crimson."

Feeling the chill of the charm, he moved quickly but silently to the door of Zreal's bedroom again. As he held the handle, he injected spirituality into the thin silver slice.

Creak! Klein carefully twisted the handle and opened a tiny crack in the door.

Immediately after that, he threw the Slumber Charm inside.

Pulling back his arm, Klein closed the door again and began counting.

3

2

1

He abruptly pushed open the door and rolled on the ground.

Not sensing any movement from the three people, Klein stood up and, using the crimson moonlight shining through the window, began observing the room.

It was a normal furnished bedroom with a bed, a row of closets, a desk, a set of sofas, and a coat rack.

On the other side of the bed, a man in a black coat was sleeping soundly.

In addition to that, there was one person by the side of the sofa and another in front of the closet. All of them were asleep.

After confirming the trio's condition, Klein walked over to the bed and bent down to find a few short, yellowish-brown hair.

According to what Ian had written, Detective Zreal was a man with short, yellowish-brown hair.

"This should be right..." Klein whispered. He grabbed the few strands of hair and sat down on the sofa. He slowly sat in the darkness tainted by the crimson light and planned on using dream divination to find Zreal.

Leaning back against the back of the sofa, the corner of his mouth curled up as he made a self-deprecating comment, *Deduction, my good man...*

Chapter 224: Mystic-type Detective

The dim room was covered in a thin veil of crimson moonlight, and everything was indistinct.

The three men in the black coats were sleeping in different spots. And on the sofa, Klein's eyes half-blended into the darkness by closing them, it was as if he had entered a deep slumber.

His dream was a gray, distorted world, occasionally flashing with brilliance.

Finally, the brilliance settled to form a scene.

It was a gloomy corner, the ground sloshed with sewage. A man with short brown hair, a white shirt, and a brown vest was leaning against the wall, surrounded by a dense mischief of gray rats.

Half of the man's lips had been bitten off, revealing his yellowish teeth and rotten gums. His nose was only stained with blood, mixed with some short hairs, and the flesh on his face had disappeared, piece by piece, revealing white bone. White, fat maggots were crawling around everywhere, constantly squirming, and his throat seemed to have been the victim of some wild beast; at least half of it was missing.

Klein could just barely make out that this was Zreal Viktor Lee. It was nearly impossible to relate him to the mature and handsome man in the black-and-white photograph he had taken with Ian.

Zreal is already dead. In a few days, he would probably be gnawed to the point where he would only be bone. He might not even have a complete skeleton left... Klein left the dream and recalled what he had just seen.

His past experiences had allowed him to witness similar corpses more calmly.

Looking out of the window at the crimson moon, Klein thought for more than ten seconds and decided to try communicating with the soul of the man in black next to the sofa.

During the last few days of preparations, he had concocted a bottle of Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medication. As for Serenity

Agent, Klein had no need for it. He was personally capable of invading the dreams of others and forcefully communicating with their souls while maintaining calm and rationale.

After setting up a simple altar and letting the quiet and tranquil fragrance waft out to create a half-dreaming state, Klein prayed to himself, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era."

Following that, he entered the world above the gray fog and used more than two-thirds of his spirituality to give a response.

When I advance to Sequence 7, such prayers should also allow me to use a little of the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, just like my summoning and bestowment rituals... Looking around, Klein made a rough judgment and quickly returned to the real world.

He passed through what seemed like a starry sky and a chaotic storm of thoughts, entering the mental plane of the target.

There, he saw the man's illusory figure floating in midair.

"Who sent you to Zreal's home?" Klein looked at him and asked in a deep voice.

The man replied in a daze, his illusory eyes vacant, "Meursault. Meursault sent me to wait for the boy named Ian."

The light in his spiritual world changed, revealing a lean, capable-looking, dark-skinned man. He was none other than the leader of the group who was chasing Ian on the steam train.

As expected, it's him... Klein, who had exhausted so much of his spirituality in responding to the prayer, was beginning to feel exhausted. He hurriedly asked, "Who ordered Meursault?"

"No idea... He's an 'executioner' of our Zmanger gang. No one can order him other than the boss," the man said, blankly.

Zmanger... The word "warrior" in the language of the highlanders... Klein, a pseudo-historian but a true mysticism scholar, suddenly felt a sharp pain in his head, and his body involuntarily flew out of the storm of thoughts.

Not long afterwards, he exited the mediumship and felt his head throbbing.

He was in no hurry to leave. He methodically packed up the materials and the short yellowish-brown hair before opening the oriel window to let in the cold night wind to disperse the smell of the Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medication.

While this happened, Klein returned to the balcony, locked the door from the inside, and wiped off all the places he had touched.

When Zreal's bedroom returned to its original state, he then held his hand to his chest and bowed towards the three men who were still sleeping soundly.

Straightening his back, Klein put on his gloves and leaped, nimbly flipping out of the oriel window. He stood firmly, tiptoeing in the abnormally tight space.

He raised the open window's vertical latch and used a tarot card to hold its bottom. With his Clown abilities, he took in the details and adjusted the balance.

After a few seconds, Klein slowly pulled back the tarot card, and the vertical latch suddenly stopped in place and didn't fall further.

Whoosh!

First, he closed the unlatched half of the window, then he jumped over to the window with a latch. His right hand jerked inward, closing the other half of the window.

The speed of the action was so quick that the latch didn't fall down until there was a vibration, accurately inserting itself into the matching hole.

Clang! A sound that was difficult to eliminate rang out, like a strong wind slamming onto the surface of the glass.

Klein knew that the three men in the bedroom were about to awaken. Without further ado, he jumped onto the street.

For the current him, the height from the second floor wouldn't pose any danger. It was just that he couldn't maintain his silence when he landed, so he didn't make any obvious noises.

Klein quickly left the vicinity, as well as Rose Street, but he didn't directly take a rental carriage back to Cherwood Borough's Minsk Street.

He turned a few corners and headed to the neighboring East Borough.

It was a cold night, and the wind sent a biting chill right into his bones. Klein shivered and decided that he would need an additional sweater for his future missions. He decided to buy charcoal on one of the following days and let the fireplace carry out its role.

After an unknown period of time, he entered Backlund's East Borough despite not having a map. He had completely relied on instinct.

There were only a few gas lamps to be seen in the distance, and if it wasn't for the fact that the dark clouds hadn't covered the crimson moon, Klein believed that many parts of the road would be pitch black.

As he was walking, he suddenly saw pairs of eyes appear in the deep darkness in front of him. They came stooping from a distance.

They sauntered over from a vague distance away, in silence.

Living corpses? Klein came to a sudden halt. He reached out for his Requiem Charm and tarot cards, and he quickly activated his Spirit Vision.

He saw the unhealthy and weak colored auras and saw the faces of the numerous figures.

These were all living people, normal living people with numbed expressions, vacant eyes, and weak movements. There were both men and women.

It's almost midnight; why are they still walking on the streets... Confused, Klein warily leaned to one side, passing the group on the sidewalk, but soon, he came across a second wave, a third wave; all of them had the same pain amidst numbness.

He frowned slightly, and just as he was about to move forward to inquire, he suddenly heard a shout ahead.

“Get up! All of you get up!

“You sons of bitches!

“The streets and parks aren’t for people like you to sleep in!”

... Klein was startled, then the corresponding term “Poor Law” popped up in his mind, and he understood what was going on.

He had experienced the same thing himself.

Phew... Klein exhaled, picked up the pace, and headed for his one-bedroom house on Black Palm Street in the East Borough.

There, he slept for two hours. After recovering some of his spirituality, he went out again and broke a withered branch to serve as a “dowsing rod.”

“The location of Zreal’s corpse. “The
location of Zreal’s corpse.”

...

After repeated divinations, Klein walked for a long time with the help of the short yellowish-brown hair until he arrived at a corner of East Borough where there was a sewer entrance.

Twelve years ago, after the great plague, the Loen Kingdom gradually built up an advanced sewer system in the capital and, in one fell swoop, surpassed “Roselle’s Heritage” of the Intis Republic.

Moving the manhole cover out the way, Klein held his breath and climbed down the vertical metal stairs.

Since his clothes weren’t specially made, he was unable to bring too many items due to the lack of pockets. He hadn’t brought Quelaag’s Oil which he had learned about from Frye. Klein felt especially regretful for not having brought the refreshing and odor-dispelling Quelaag’s Oil.

Ten seconds later, Klein’s feet touched the sticky ground.

The feeling of filth caused fine goosebumps to pop up over his arms and body. However, he could only endure it and continue walking forward, venturing deeper into the empty and quiet sewer.

There was a fork in the road ahead, one which was relatively hidden. A thick pungent smell wafted over from there.

Klein turned around and walked to the end where he saw a dense number of spirituality light dots and aura colors.

Without needing to use a candle, he activated his Spirit Vision and directly saw that in the dark corner, there was a rotten corpse that had been bitten to pieces.

This was the exact same scene he had seen in the dream divination.

Squeak!

The densely packed gray rats scampered in every direction, but there were also some who stayed where they were, unwilling to leave and part with their food.

After confirming that it was Zreal, Klein hesitated for a moment before quickly setting up a mediumship ritual.

Hmm... If there's nothing wrong with Ian's description, and Zreal died only a few days ago, I should be able to get some rough information by channeling his spirit... he thought confidently.

Whoosh!

As the wind swirled and the wall of spirituality was set up, all the rats fled, and Klein proceeded with his ritual as he had done before.

"The cause of Zreal's death. "The
cause of Zreal's death."

...

As he recited the words, Klein's eyes turned black. His pupils and the whites of his eyes disappeared. He quickly used Cogitation to enter a dream.

However, nothing appeared in that misty, illusory world.

Klein opened his eyes, frowning slightly as he made his judgment.

The channeling failed...

Someone has dealt with Zreal's spirit...

A Beyonder was involved in this.

The fact that someone was able to disguise as Zreal, making the other detectives unable to see through him, also proves this point.

After some deliberation, Klein came to a decision; it was to end this matter here and not get involved any further. Regardless, he had fulfilled the requirements of the job that he was entrusted with.

"I'll get Ian to call the police," he muttered as he put away the materials and removed the wall of spirituality.

Chapter 225: Unnoticeable Guidance

Klein backed up from the fork in the path, without touching Zreal's corpse.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Suddenly, a sound echoed in the distance through the empty sewers.

Klein listened for a few seconds before decisively retreating towards the exit, down the dirty concrete road that ran along both sides of the sewage channel.

There was no need to take risks in matters that didn't involve him.

Klein closed the iron manhole cover after he climbed out of the sewers. After ensuring that the surrounding area looked normal, he returned to his rented room in the East Borough and changed out of his disguise.

Then, he put on his gold-rimmed glasses, walked to another street, took a rented carriage, and returned to Cherwood Borough in the silence and cold of three in the morning. However, he didn't return to Minsk Street.

Then, Klein made another huge detour, and only after confirming that no one was following him, did he enter his house. He slept till dawn and was woken up by the doorbell.

He sat up immediately, put on his shirt, buttoned his vest, and hurried down to the first floor to open the door.

And even before that, his premonition ability as a Clown was already capable of naturally forming the image of the visitor in his mind.

The visitor was wearing an old coat, a brown round hat, and a tattered satchel. He had bright red eyes, a delicate face, and a quiet temperament. It was none other than Ian, the teenage boy who had come to entrust him with a job yesterday.

"Good morning, Detective Moriarty," Ian greeted him and looked around. "Any progress? Yeah... I'm only asking because I happened to pass by."

Klein nodded seriously and said, "Yes."

"..." Ian seemed shocked as he didn't say a word for quite a while.

After a while, he stammered in surprise, "Have you determined Mr. Zreal's condition?"

"Yes." Klein paused for a moment, then said seriously, "I found Zreal's corpse."

"Corpse..." Ian's pupils shrank as he repeated it in a low tone.

He wasn't too surprised, as if he had already expected the worst possible outcome.

Klein watched silently without interjecting.

"Sigh..." Ian exhaled and warily surveyed his surroundings. "Your efficiency is amazing. Can you take me to see Mr. Zreal's body?"

"No problem. In fact, that's what I was planning to do." Klein then thought for a moment before saying, "I hope you won't mention me when you call the police. Just say that you found the corpse yourself. I believe you know how to make up a reason."

Ian wasn't surprised; he knew that not every detective liked to deal with the police. In fact, except for the very famous detectives, who often gave advice to the police with mutual cooperation, the rest were discriminated against, ostracized, and even extorted from.

This was the current situation of the Loen Kingdom.

"Alright," Ian readily agreed.

Considering that they were entering the sewers, Klein changed into a set of clothes worn by the common working class, put on a deer-hunting cap, and took a lantern with him.

Both of them took the public carriage to the East Borough. They walked for half an hour to reach the remote sewer entrance under the watchful gazes filled with numbness and malicious intent.

"How did you find it?" Ian asked, half-surprised and halfcurious, as he watched Klein lift the manhole cover and climb down.

Klein focused on the area beneath him and answered casually, “Skillful training which includes many techniques in reasoning, investigation, tracking, and interrogation.”

Ian followed him into the sewers. He nodded without looking disgusted.

“...You seem to have received very professional training.”

Klein didn’t answer him directly. He held the already lit lantern and led Ian to the fork in the path where they arrived at the gloomy corner.

He narrowed his eyes as he approached. More of Zreal’s body was missing now when compared to the previous night. He was missing an arm and half of his ribs.

That’s not something a rat can do... Klein muttered to himself and didn’t inform Ian of this.

With the help of the lantern’s light, Ian was able to clearly see the corpse’s appearance.

He squatted down suddenly, vomited, and gradually vomited yellow-green bile. Klein took out the Quelaag’s Oil he prepared, unscrewed the cap, and bent over to place the mouth close to Ian’s nose.

Ian’s eyes lit up, and he calmed down.

Nearly twenty seconds later, he weakly whispered, “Thank you...”

He stood up slowly and examined the mutilated corpse a few more times.

“I can confirm that this is Detective Zreal.”

“My condolences,” Klein replied out of politeness. “I suggest you call the police.”

“Okay.” Ian nodded indiscernibly as he followed Klein back to the surface.

At that moment, Klein clapped his hands.

“This is the end of my mission. As for what should be done after this, that is up to you.”

Ian fell silent for a few seconds.

"I still owe you three matters. You can tell me now."

"Actually, I can only think of one at the moment," Klein answered frankly. "I want to know where I can get a gun and bullets, without needing a full class weapon permit."

Ian spoke, almost without thinking, "Go to Bravehearts Bar at Iron Gate Street in the Backlund Bridge district. Find Kaspars Kalinin. Tell him 'Old Geezer' introduced you."

"Alright, let's talk about the other two matters in the future. I have a feeling that we'll meet again." Klein deliberately nodded casually.

Ian gave him a look but didn't say anything.

The two split up and headed down different streets in the East Borough. The secluded spot, once again, regained its silence.

After walking for a while, Klein suddenly turned around and retraced his steps. He then hid himself in a secluded corner, peeking at the entrance to the sewer.

After waiting for two or three minutes, he saw Ian return silently as he looked around warily.

Klein withdrew his gaze in a timely manner, leaned his back against the wall, and listened.

He heard the scraping sound of the manhole cover being removed and heard someone climbing down.

Carefully poking his head out, Klein discovered that Ian had reentered the sewers.

Was there a clue or something on Zreal's body? Indeed, this matter goes deeper than it seems... He nodded thoughtfully.

Having satisfied his curiosity, Klein decided to leave for real and planned to seek out Kaspars, two days later.

...

At tea time, Viscount Glaint was in his home situated in Empress Borough.

The door to the study was tightly shut, separating the four people inside from the participating guests in the salon outside.

“Xio, Fors, this is the reward the two of you deserve.” Dressed in a pale yellow lace dress, Audrey pushed a bulging envelope across the desk to the two ladies sitting opposite her.

Xio wanted to say something polite, but her hand had reached for the envelope faster than her mouth. Feeling the weight of the money, she could only say sincerely, “Miss Audrey, thank you for your generosity. Your honesty makes you look even more

beautiful.”

As she spoke, she untied the thin string around the envelope and saw the bills inside.

It was uniform gray paper money with black stripes. The stack was thick and exuded a special smell of ink, one that left one feeling refreshed.

“10 pounds...” Xio took one note out and checked its face value. Beside her, Fors, who appeared lazy and unbothered by money, had also leaned over.

This is at least... Observing the thickness, Xio tried to figure out how many notes there were.

She couldn’t help but exchange looks with Fors and saw the surprise in each other’s eyes.

This was obviously a lot more than they had imagined!

Audrey smiled faintly and said, “A total of eight hundred pounds. Decide how you will split the money between the two of you.

“I’m very sorry that this matter had placed you in danger.”

Eight hundred pounds... No, there’s no need to apologize. Even if we had to do it again and knew of the possible consequences, I would still accept the request... Even if it’s divided evenly, with my savings, it’s

enough to buy the potion formula for Sheriff... Xio, who was slightly taller than 150cm, stared blankly at the notes in the envelope, wishing she could pull them all out and count them over and over again.

She believed that the generous and beautiful Miss Audrey wouldn't pay them any less, but what if she had made a mistake counting?

Everyone makes mistakes at times! Xio raised her right hand, paused for a few seconds, then silently lowered it.

The corners of Fors's lips couldn't help but rise as she said wistfully, "This is even more than the royalties I've received for my 'Stormwind Mountain Villa' so far..."

Should I praise Miss Audrey or laugh at the poverty of an author? She added silently.

Viscount Glaint, who was sitting on the sofa, was also a little envious, but it wasn't directed at Xio or Fors. As a viscount with a fairly good financial situation, 800 pounds wasn't a large sum.

What he envied was Audrey's ability to hand out money without feeling the slightest burden.

"Ahem..." Viscount Glaint cleared his throat, "If you can get the formula for Apothecary, I will also provide you with substantial payment."

"We'll do our best!" Xio answered without any hesitation. Then, she looked at Audrey. "We've recently come into contact with someone who's suspected to be from the Psychology Alchemists, and we'll soon have clues regarding the Spectator potion you're looking for."

Xio, I'm already at Sequence 8; far stronger than you... Audrey smiled in a reserved manner as she said, "I'm looking forward to

it."

With that said, the four began chatting about various rumors among the Beyonder circles while following Audrey's example of finding books they wished to read.

Suddenly, Xio's eyes lit up as she saw two hardcover books.

“History of the Loen Kingdom’s Aristocracy” and “Study of the Coat of Arms”

Meanwhile, Fors also found books that interested her.

“Geography and People of the Feysac Empire” and “Traveling the Northern Continent”

“Honorable Viscount Glaint, may I borrow these two books? I’ll return them soon.” Xio looked pleadingly at the owner of the study.

Glaint nodded without much care.

“No problem.

At his response, Fors hurriedly made a request as well and similarly obtained his approval.

The corners of Audrey’s mouth curved into a faint smile as she witnessed all of this. She looked modestly to the side, pretending to be looking for a book.

As a qualified Spectator who had just advanced, she had accurately grasped Xio’s and Fors’s preferences in certain domains after being in contact with them multiple times. Thus, she had made arrangements in advance without anyone realizing it.

Letting the one being guided feel like it was done out of their own will was a manifestation of the powers of a Spectator.

...

In the evening, Xio was curled up on the sofa in front of the fireplace, reading History of the Loen Kingdom’s Aristocracy under the gas lamp’s illumination. Fors had gone for a gathering meant for authors.

After reading for quite a while, Xio suddenly felt something strange about the hardback cover, so she carefully examined it and found an interlayer where an ancient piece of paper was hidden inside.

The front side of the paper was covered with the special symbols created by Emperor Roselle, and on the back was a paragraph written in ancient Hermes.

“Viscount Glaint’s ancestors deciphered some of Emperor Roselle’s special symbols?” Xio was suddenly excited.

She struggled to decipher the ancient Hermes as she muttered silently

“The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

Cherwood Borough. 15 Minsk Street.

A satiated Klein sat in a reclining chair in the living room, beside a fireplace burning with charcoal.

In a warm environment akin to summer, Klein wore a white shirt, a black vest, and thin trousers, while having a newspaper spread open in front of him as he flipped through the section with the most ads.

A new type of transportation vehicle is in urgent need for investments. Details to be discussed in person... Klein read the advertisement twice before picking up a pencil from a small, dark red table to his side and circled the message.

If there were no commissions tomorrow or the day after, he planned on seeing if this so-called new type of transportation vehicle had any investment value—such matters were impossible to divine since there was a lack of sufficient information.

I hope it's a product similar to a bicycle... Klein mumbled to himself before suddenly hearing an illusory prayer echo in his ears.

Who is it? Miss Justice? Mr. Hanged Man? The Sun? Or some clerk at the Backlund Bank is copying my passcode? Thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he put down the newspaper, returned to his bedroom, and locked the door behind him.

Taking four steps counterclockwise, he entered the world above the gray fog. He saw that to the side of The Fool's seat and by the edge of the ancient mottled bronze table was a clear and bright brilliance that emitted waves of radiance.

The experienced Klein calmly sat down and emanated his spirituality, touching the light ripples of light in response to the prayer.

The scene in front of his eyes suddenly changed. It was a blurry sofa with a petite woman in a knight's trainee uniform curled up on it.

She's not copying my passcode... She's reading a piece of paper... Klein suddenly realized the reason for this.

She should be one of the two Beyonders that Miss Justice mentioned that requires my vetting...

After nearly twenty seconds of silence, Klein didn't give any form of formal response. He planned on taking the next step deep at night. He would then test her reaction, attitude, and way of handling things to test her personality and abilities.

Of course, he would absolutely not force others to join the Tarot Club.

...

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era..." Xio, who had just finished chanting the ancient Hermes sentence, froze for a few seconds. Then, she suddenly straightened her back and sat up straight.

This seems to be the honorary name of a hidden existence! She realized this in horror.

Furthermore, her knowledge in mysticism and the various rumors she had heard told her that once someone recited the full honorary name of a hidden existence, it would often attract the attention of said existence!

The consequences of such attention was mostly misfortune or could even be described as tragic!

Quite a few of those hidden beings were the incarnations of the evil gods and devils!

Furthermore, I recited it in ancient Hermes, completely unprotected... I'm so dumb. Why did I focus so much effort in identifying the sentence and actually read it in my head... Xio looked around in horror, terrified that an indescribable monster would suddenly appear in her house.

The sofa, coffee table, cupboard, dining table, chairs, oil painting, and other items were all reflected in her eyes, without any changes.

After nearly a minute of heightened vigilance, Xio relaxed a little and comforted herself, "Don't worry, don't be afraid. I just said the honorific name and didn't follow up with a prayer.

"This is an incomplete ceremony, so it shouldn't attract any attention.

“Moreover, there’s a good chance that the name might’ve been translated by the owner of the paper based on the special symbols left behind by Emperor Roselle. It might not be correct.”

But, but I heard that if the evil gods and devils generate interest, they would still provide a response even if the ceremony is incomplete... I’m so stupid, really... As she thought over the matter, Xio’s face scrunched up into a grimace. She felt that she had made a grave mistake.

After waiting for a few more minutes, she slowly exhaled as she puffed out her cheeks when she realized that there was no obvious response.

She stuffed the piece of paper back into the “History of the Loen Kingdom’s Aristocracy” as she entered the bathroom with a heavy heart. She turned on the faucet and tried to use the cold water to clear her head.

Splash!

As nearly transparent water flowed down, Xio hunched her back and reached out her palms to cup some water.

Just as she was about to dab the cold water onto her face, she spotted a long, slightly curly brown hair in the mirror through the corner of her eye.

As for her, she had shoulder-length, unkempt yellow hair.

Suddenly, Xio’s hair stood on end.

She stomped on the ground and, with a push of her hands, she shot backwards, turning her body halfway around and slamming the entity with her elbow.

Pow!

She leaned against a warm body, causing the other party to let out a familiar scream before falling to the ground.

Xio stopped any subsequent actions and looked at her good friend who was hugging her stomach in pain, tears in her eyes.

The corner of her mouth twitched without her realizing it as she said, “Fors, when did you get back?”

Fors didn't reply immediately. It took her quite a while to get over the pain. As she slowly stood up, using the wall as a support, she grumbled, "I j-just got back. Xio, are you nuts!? Why did you attack me without even looking clearly! And you hit me so hard!"

"Where did you come in from?" Xio asked awkwardly.

"Through the bathroom window. Why? Is there a problem? As an Apprentice, it's normal to not bring a key with me," Fors replied matter-of-factly.

Xio straightened her back and pushed away all responsibility.

"Then why didn't you go through the door? You really gave me a fright just now!"

Fors blinked her eyes and said, "If that's the case, I'll have to make one big round. That's too troublesome; I'm used to walking in a straight line."

She paused as she asked suspiciously, "However, wasn't your reaction a bit too much?"

Xio struggled for three seconds, choosing between losing her dignity or losing her life, before answering honestly, "It-it's because I made a mistake, a fatal mistake."

"What mistake?" Fors asked, rubbing her belly as she felt puzzled and concerned.

Xio hurriedly recounted the whole story of how she had discovered the interlayer in the book's cover and found an old piece of paper in it. Then, she had accidentally recited the suspected incantation in ancient Hermes silently. What she had recited seemed to contain the honorific name of some hidden existence.

"You... Where's your brain? It-it should be fine. The ceremony wasn't complete, and who knows if it's real or fake..." Fors looked around, and for some baffling reason, she felt a chill.

She followed Xio back to the living room and saw the yellowed sheet of paper, as well as Roselle's special symbols, and the sentence that was written in ancient Hermes.

After a quick glance, Fors, the professional researcher in mysticism, nodded and said, “It’s not any of the evil gods, devils, and secret existences that I know of. It should be fine.

“Furthermore, nothing has happened up till now. That means that everything should be fine.”

Seeing Xio relax, she thought of the pain in her stomach, so she deliberately added maliciously, “Of course, if something were to really happen, there’s no way we can rescue ourselves with our meager abilities.”

Xio’s face paled as she blurted out, “Fors, let’s sleep together tonight. Forget it, I’ll just sleep on my own...”

Fors pricked up her brows and chuckled, “Alright. In fact, you don’t have to worry about it. Think about it, I hear strange murmurs whenever there’s a full moon, but I don’t see any signs me going mad or losing control.

“Well... We should study the other three books. If there’s the same piece of paper and the same incantation, it means that it’s very likely to be a prank from Viscount Glaint.”

The duo hurriedly flipped through “Study of the Coat of Arms” and the other books and checked them carefully, but they didn’t find anything else out of the ordinary.

Xio looked at Fors, who looked back at her, turning the mood somber again.

“Should we sneak into Saint Samuel Cathedral’s nave tonight?” Xio came up with an inspired suggestion.

That was the headquarters of the Church of Evernight in the Backlund diocese.

“Why not Saint Hierländ Cathedral? I don’t think the Evernight Goddess will protect me...” Fors subconsciously replied.

That was the headquarters of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, which was located in the St. George Borough, adjacent to many huge factories in the southeast.

The two ladies with different faiths fell silent again, and after a while, Fors sighed and said, “And that would make us end up being targeted by the Nighthawks or the Machinery Hivemind. That might be the goal of that hidden existence.

“Alright, go to sleep. We’ll know the answer tomorrow morning. If nothing happens by then, it means that it’ll really be okay.”

...

In the middle of the night, the waxing crimson moon was obscured by clouds, and the stars were barely visible in the sky above Backlund.

Klein instinctively woke up, lifted his blanket, got off the bed, and entered the world above the gray fog.

He sat down on the high back chair that belonged to The Fool. He planned on responding to Miss Justice’s companion and proceed with the ‘examination process.’

At that moment, he suddenly had a new idea.

Perhaps he could try and see if he could pull her into the world above the gray fog under the present circumstances!

The young lady must have fallen asleep, and even if I succeed, she would probably treat it as a dream that appears clearer than usual... Hmm... If I succeed, I can sever the connection in a timely manner to prevent her from seeing her surroundings clearly...

After repeatedly deliberating over the matter, Klein stretched out his hand and tapped at the rippling ring of light to form a connection with it.

Suddenly, Klein felt his spirituality surge out in an unstoppable manner, causing the mysterious space above the gray fog to tremble slightly.

Just when Klein thought that his spirituality would be completely drained, everything calmed down. A blurry, distorted figure appeared at the edge of the long bronze table.

In her reverie, Xio opened her eyes sleepily and saw the endless fog, the ancient high back chair, and a dark figure watching her.

Klein was overjoyed and immediately severed the connection according to his plan.

The hazy, petite figure disappeared, but within the grayish-white mist, a crimson, illusory star appeared.

Klein looked at this scene and confirmed one thing. As long as someone chanted his name, he would be able to pull that person into the world above the gray fog. The crimson star was a symbol of a stable connection.

However, there are certain limitations. With my current strength, at most, I can establish another connection... Hmm... Based on my previous experiences, my current spirituality can only pull in Beyonders who are a Sequence higher than me, and it won't necessarily be a success. It's just a preliminary judgment, so it shouldn't be a problem if it's someone at the same Sequence as me or lower... Klein thought, feeling satisfied.

There was no need for him to respond. His attempt was already enough.

...

Xio sat up in her sleep.

She had been worrying about the potential dangers of chanting an honorary name the entire time. Not long after she fell asleep, she dreamed of a mysterious space, and a gray foggy figure looking down on her from above.

The dream was so clear, so clear that Xio felt afraid.

She looked at the sleeping Fors beside her and thought with a tremble, *Is it a nightmare caused by fear, or is it because of the attention I garnered from some hidden existence, resulting in being haunted by evil spirits?*

Yes... There's going to be a gathering of Beyonders tomorrow night. In addition to buying the formula, I need to find a person who is good at exorcising evil spirits to purify myself.

Chapter 227: Inventor Leppard

Sitting at his own dining table on a foggy morning, Klein broke up his specially bought wheat bread and soaked it in milk, improving the way he ate it.

Although his body had changed a long time ago, his pursuit and obsession with delicacies were engraved into his soul. He was completely unable to adapt to the Loen Kingdom's monotonous and repetitive style of breakfast. He could only try his best at experimenting. He tried not to limit himself to toast, bread, bacon, sausages, and butter. He tried hard to expand the boundaries and improve the way he ate. For example, his recipes had new additions such as pork-filled pastries from the south, Feynapotter noodles, and roasted corn pastries.

"Caviar from the Feysac Empire isn't bad either, but it's too expensive. It's only suitable for formal meals..." Klein scooped up a small piece of wheat bread he had softened and put it in his mouth. Just by chewing it a little, he could feel the intertwining flavors of milk with the fragrance of wheat. The aftertaste of the bread was even sweeter.

After breakfast, Klein put down his cutlery, but he was in no hurry to tidy up the table. He picked up the newspapers, and began to read.

I'll do a divination in a while. If there's nothing else to do, I'll pay Mr. Leppard a visit at St. George Borough's Sird Street and see if his new transportation vehicle is worth investing in... Backlund is really big. Every borough is almost the size of Tingen City. The East Borough is especially ridiculous. It's at least twice as large... The easiest and most economical way to travel is to walk, followed by the steam metro, before walking again. It's just quite a waste of time... Klein's mind wandered aimlessly.

Backlund's public horse carriage system was rather similar to Tingen's. The price was about the same, but the only problem was that most of them were confined to a single borough. If one wanted to go from Cherwood to St. George, a few transfers were needed and that would naturally raise the price.

Such a situation made the prospects for a new transportation vehicle very alluring.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

At that moment, knocks on the door sounded. It was as loud as the pounding of a hammer.

Who is it... Don't they know how to ring the doorbell... He muttered a few words, straightened his collar, walked to the door, and pulled it open.

In front of him was a familiar face. It was the highlander man who had chased Ian at the steam metro. His skin was dark, his eye sockets recessed, and he was lean and hardy man.

According to Klein's mediumship results, the man's name was Meursault, an "executioner" of the Zmanger gang who was almost equal to the boss.

"Excuse me, who are you looking for? Do you have a commission to entrust with me?" Klein deliberately acted somewhat confused.

Meursault was wearing a black coat and a pompous silk hat, but he didn't look anything like a gentleman at all.

He coldly sized Klein up, then he asked in Loen, with a thick highlander accent, "Are you Detective Sherlock Moriarty?" "Yes," Klein replied short and sweet.

Meursault nodded his head stiffly.

"I want to hire you to find someone."

"We can talk about the exact situation inside." Klein prevented himself from acting odd in any way.

Meursault shook his head coldly.

"There's no need."

After saying that, his eyes suddenly became sharp.

“The person I’m looking for is called Ian. Ian Wright. He has a pair of bright red eyes, maybe fifteen or sixteen. He likes to wear a brown, old coat and a round hat of the same color. I believe you know him.”

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Meursault seemed to ignore Klein’s denial. “He’s a thief who has stolen an important item from me. If you can find him, you’ll be paid at least 10 pounds.”

“You’ve provided too few clues.” Klein made up an excuse.

“30 pounds.” Meursault made a new offer.

Klein glanced at him and said, “No, this is against my principle of confidentiality.”

“50 pounds,” Meursault replied coldly.

“...I’m sorry, I cannot accept the mission.” Klein was startled for two seconds, but in the end, he still chose to reject the request.

Meursault studied him slowly for a few seconds as his eyes slowly turned cold and fierce.

He didn’t offer a new price, nor did he politely bid farewell. He turned around abruptly and walked quickly to the end of the street.

This gang has pretty good intelligence... They actually know that Ian had come to me once... Klein secretly sighed, full of emotion, but he didn’t feel too much anxiety or fear.

After all, I’m someone who once directly faced the son of an evil god, although, it was separated by a belly... As he thought about it, his smile suddenly became brilliant. He began flipping a coin to decide whether or not he was going out today.

The answer was positive.

...

St. George Borough, Sird Street.

Having transferred from a tracked public carriage to the steam metro, before transferring to a trackless carriage, Klein finally arrived at his destination, spending a total of 11 pence.

Just after he alighted the carriage, he discovered that a drizzle had already started, but he hadn't brought an umbrella.

According to the newspapers and magazines, this is a daily occurrence in Backlund. The reason why hats are popular is that ladies and gentlemen don't carry umbrellas all the time. Klein pressed down on his half top hat and briskly ran outside Unit 9 and used the eaves to shield himself from the rain.

He brushed off the obvious water droplets from his body and rang the doorbell.

However, he didn't hear any cuckoo sounds or tinkling sounds.

Is the doorbell broken? Klein was just about to raise his hand to knock when he suddenly saw footsteps approaching from afar.

The image of the person naturally appeared in his mind. It was a tall, thin man with black hair and blue eyes. He was in his thirties and was dressed in grayish-blue worker attire, but he appeared gentle and refined.

Creak. The door opened. The gentleman rubbed his forehead and asked, "May I know who you are looking for? Is there something?"

Klein took off his hat and bowed slightly.

"I'm here to find Mr. Leppard. I'm interested in his new transportation vehicle."

The gentleman's eyes suddenly lit up.

"I'm Leppard. Come in, please."

He turned to the side and allowed Klein entry. However, there was no coat rack in the foyer.

Klein could only lean his cane and not take off his coat. He followed Leppard into the living room.

It had to be said that the gentleman's house was very messy. On the coffee table in the living room alone were many mechanical objects, such as wrenches, bearings and screwdrivers.

"How much do you wish to invest? Ah, right. Would you like some coffee or black tea? Uh... it seems I'm out of black tea..." Leppard blurted out.

This gentleman is a bit straightforward, and doesn't seem to be very good at interpersonal relationships... A thought flashed through Klein's mind, and he changed the words he planned on saying. He went straight to the point, "I've to see your new transportation vehicle before I make a decision.

"I can't make any promises without understanding anything."

As he spoke, he looked around and saw a triangular Sacred Emblem hanging on the wall.

That was the symbol of the God of Steam and Machinery. The solid triangle was filled with symbols such as steam, gears, and levers.

Leppard wasn't irritated by Klein's straightforwardness. He immediately said, "I'll show you."

As soon as he said that, he slapped his head. "I almost forgot, we have to sign a non-disclosure agreement to ensure that you don't steal my invention."

Mr. Leppard, you don't have a very good memory either... Klein smiled and said, "That wouldn't be an issue."

After signing the simple contract, Leppard led Klein into a room that seemed like an activity room. He had knocked through the neighboring guest room and basement, making it much wider and spacious.

The ground was littered with components, and a rough object, that was half the height of a man, that resembled a carriage stood in the center.

In addition to that, the line of the doorbell was connected there and was cleverly constructed. As long as someone pulled the rope, a steel ball would pop out from the mechanism, allowing it to roll along a special

track before colliding with the object in the center to produce a clanging sound.

The sound certainly wasn't too loud, but it was enough to rouse Leppard who was engrossed in machinery.

"Is that the new form of transportation you invented?" Klein pointed to the crude object in the middle of the room.

"Yes, I invented it based on Emperor Roselle's imagination!" He replied with a fervent look in his eyes.

"Emperor Roselle's imagination?" Klein asked in surprise.

Leppard explained in a tone of adoration, "Emperor Roselle left behind a number of manuscripts in which he drew his vision of the machines of the future. He was an outstanding genius, no—a master! Many things have already been turned into reality! "Heh heh, this manuscript is kept in the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. There's no way for non pious believers to borrow them."

...Emperor, are you still leaving no stones unturned for others... Klein's mouth twitched, almost unable to maintain his smile.

"Describe it in detail." He changed the subject.

Leppard led Klein to the crude metallic object and opened the door.

"This is a transportation tool that doesn't need a horse.

"The driver sits in the front left seat, continuously stepping on the pedals. Through the levers and a chain connects to the four wheels, allowing the vehicle to roll forward. And on the wheels, I used inflated rubber which can make the journey smooth."

So it's a human-powered car? Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

He said with some deliberation, "With such a huge carriage, and at least four passengers, it would be impossible to travel that far just by relying on human strength alone."

"That's exactly my next goal—to reduce the weight and expand the lever a few times! However, my financial situation isn't at its best. I can't fund any more attempts." Leppard looked hopefully at Klein.

“Why not consider other methods? Such as using steam as the driving force?” Klein slowly organized his words.

Leppard shook his head. “There have been people who have invented that, but it has a very huge body, making it difficult to drive it along many streets.”

That was exactly what Klein was waiting for.

“Then, why don’t you just do something simpler? For example, have only two wheels with only one person without an outer

shell.”

“You mean something like a bike?” Leppard asked in thought.

Roselle’s manuscript has that? Klein nodded heavily.

“Yes.”

“Those bikes which other people have invented aren’t very practical... Simplifying this... seems like it might work. It will really seem different. But, who would buy it?” Leppard said to himself.

Klein didn’t hesitate to provide him with a direction.

“The postman, the working class who have a bit of savings, the businessmen who doesn’t need to look respectable while hoping to save money... There are many of them in Backlund.” Leppard thought for a moment, then nodded slightly.

“...I can try, but I don’t have the money for spare parts...”

“I’ll invest 100 gold pounds. In addition to my suggestion just now, I’ll take a total of...” Klein hesitated to say ten percent of the shares. Fifteen percent was better. After all, a hundred pounds was, strictly speaking, not much.

“You can have 35% of the shares! But that’s only limited to the bike concept you described!” Leppard spoke out first, afraid that Klein would make an unreasonable request.

“Deal!” Klein immediately laughed. “We’ll first draw up a simple contract and settle this matter. Afterwards, I’ll find a lawyer to make a

formal contract and add some detailed terms. For example, if there's anyone else who wants to invest, they must first get my consent."

"No problem," Leppard replied impatiently. All he wanted was to buy his spare parts as soon as possible.

...

In the gloominess brought about by the drizzle, Klein returned to Cherwood Borough's Minsk Street.

He entered the house and went straight to the bathroom on the first floor and resolved the problem of his bloated stomach.

Splash.

As the water echoed, Klein bent down to wash his hands.

At that moment, an image appeared in his mind.

The mirror in front of the sink reflected his lowered head, dim surroundings, and a pair of eyes to his side.

A pair of eyes!

Almost instinctively, Klein bent his knees and rolled sideways toward the bathroom door.

Sou!

A small black-feathered arrow stabbed into the wash basin. The arrow seemed to be made of bone and suffused a blue luster. It was extremely beautiful.

If Klein had hesitated in any way, he definitely wouldn't have been able to escape this sudden attack!

After rolling for a moment, Klein reached into his pocket and attempted to pull out a few tarot cards.

But at that moment, he felt a gust of wind engulf him. Through the corner of his eyes, he saw a black figure quickly closing in on him at high speeds. It appeared in front of him in an extraordinary pose, as he tightened his foot and kicked out from bottom to top.

Realizing that he couldn't avoid the attack, Klein quickly gave up on his previous intentions and used his elbow to block the attack.

With a bang, he felt his entire left arm go numb, and his body was yanked over, just like in the sport squash, that the middle class loved to play the most, or like a soccer ball that was now popular among the lower class.

What immense strength! Klein's heart tightened. Without being flustered, he adjusted his body in midair and changed his posture, barely maintaining his balance as if he was performing acrobatics.

Pa! Pa! Pa... At this moment, a tree-bark-colored blow-pipe had just landed on the floor of the bathroom and bounced behind the door, at a declining speed.

Just as Klein was about to stretch out his body to firmly stand and face the follow-up attack, a scene suddenly flashed in his mind.

The speed of the enemy in black far exceeded his expectations, arriving even faster than he had expected. He lowered his body and swung his arm, striking him in the chest.

In the blink of an eye, Klein's body bent over, spinning half a circle more, like a small ball that kept falling and kept being thrown around.

Pow!

He stretched out his hand and pressed it to the ground, opening his legs like scissors while keeping his head low. It made blackclothed man's fist miss as it tore through empty space.

The fist that was originally aimed at his chest could only hit his legs after Klein turned his body, but his legs were opened wide.

Pushing up, his legs closed in together, allowing Klein to leap nimbly to the side as he finally managed to stand up straight.

Pow!

Before he had the chance to observe his enemy, the black figure had already arrived in front of him, bringing with it a strong gust of wind.

What a fast reaction! Klein quickly lifted his arms up in front of him to block.

With a dull thud, he felt as if he had collided with a black bear. Failing to withstand the immense force, he could only stagger backward, his arms almost turning numb in the process.

At the same time, Klein finally recognized his attacker.

He had dark skin, a lean and hardy build with recessed eye sockets. He was none other than the "executioner" of the Zmanger gang, Meursault, the person who had come to see Detective Moriarty in the morning!

Pa! Pa! Pa! With a fierce glint in his eyes, Meursault closely pursued after him as he flung both of his arms, delivering left hooks or right punches in a barrage of attacks at Klein.

The gap between Klein's strength and that of his opponent was obvious. He was unable to face him head on, and he had to rely on his agility and premonitory senses to barely avoid the combo of punches.

No! I have to make full use of my advantages! With a similar thought, Klein stopped engaging in melee combat. He lowered his body and rolled to the side.

Crack! A chair was torn apart by Meursault's kick.

Klein supported his body with one hand as he exerted strength in his waist and continued rolling in a bid to seek a chance to use his tarot cards and self-made charms.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Meursault caught up quickly and kicked out his legs, one after another, that was in no way slower than his opponent.

He was like a giant bear with the gift of agility and had zero weaknesses. He made it so that the rolling Klein was only capable of focusing on dodging and defending, without giving him the chance to draw his cards or use his charms.

Kacha! Bam! Bam!

A chair was broken, the table overturned, the coat rack toppled, and Klein had circled most of the way around, but his situation was turning dire.

I can't go on like this! He kept dodging, rolling and tumbling, seeking every opportunity to turn the situation around.

Suddenly, an idea came to him when he spotted the coffee table in the living room through the corner of his eyes.

Bam! Klein defended a blow with one arm as jumped back towards the living room while enduring the pain.

At this moment, Meursault's leg muscles bulged suddenly like they were inflated with air.

Boom! He stepped on the ground so hard that it seemed to shake, and he jumped up and shot at Klein like a bullet, with one of his legs aimed at him.

Klein barely managed to hold on for a moment before being sent flying again, crashing through the coffee table with a clang, sending the

ceramic tea set flying towards the cupboard, scattering the round fountain pens, the contract template, and the various newspapers on the floor.

Seeing that the detective in the black double-breasted coat was weakened from the impact and momentarily unable to stand up or roll, a fierce glint flashed in Meursault's eyes. He slid forward, pushing his knee out amidst the shattering sounds of the porcelain.

Klein's eyes turned dark as he watched this scene. He was already holding a contract template in his hands.

He had fled to the coffee table in the living room, ignoring the warnings his premonition was giving him, solely to pick up a contract template or newspaper!

When he saw Meursault's knee coming at him, Klein's wrist shook.

At that moment, a scene appeared in his mind once again, a scene with Meursault's neck twisted backward.

Sou!

Klein slightly pressed his wrist, shaking out the contract template in his hand.

Sou!

The contract was like a dart made of fine steel as it shot at Meursault's throat. At that moment, the distance between the two of them was less than a meter. Moreover, as Meursault closed in, the distance between them was decreasing!

A white item was reflected in Meursault's eyes as he instinctively tried to jump back to dodge it.

Oof!

The contract stabbed right through Meursault's throat, penetrating his windpipe.

Blood with patches of bubbling blood gushed out as Meursault fell in front of Klein, his knees heavily hitting the ground.

“Huff... Huff... Huff...” He pulled out the bloodied contract template and clutched his throat.

However, he was unable to stop the blood from flowing out of his wound, and his eyes gradually became unfocused.

In the end, his body twitched a few times, and he stopped moving.

Klein took a moment to recover before he had the strength to turn around and stand up. He had a few tarot cards between his fingers, on guard against possible counterattacks and other enemies.

After activating his Spirit Vision and confirming that his assailant was dead, Klein looked around and didn’t see any other auras.

Only then did he relax a little. He noticed that two of the chairs were broken, the coffee table was smashed up in several spots, and porcelain was strewn all over the floor. The entire living room, dining room, and foyer were in a mess.

Lowering his head, he saw that the sleeves of his suit had been damaged and that the outer layer of the cloth had been stained with a great deal of dust.

Suddenly, Klein said softly in a self-deprecating manner, “There’s no way to claim reimbursement for this...

“Haha. Hahaha. Hahaha.”

He laughed as if he had encountered something that could amuse him for the rest of his life. He laughed so hard that his body bent forward and backward, to the point where only his laughter reverberated in the entire house.

A few seconds later, Klein stopped smiling and walked to the corpse with a heavy expression.

He wanted to make the dead speak!

Being familiar with the mediumship ritual and answering his own prayers, Klein took of a whiff of the refreshing fragrance and used the technique of dream divination to whisper, “The mastermind who sent Meursault on this mission.”

Soon, his eyes turned black as he entered a dream and saw a gray blur.

Suddenly, the gray and blurry world and lit figures changed, forming numerous scenes and images before him.

In front of Meursault was a middle-aged man without a hat. His white shirt had a complicated, layered, petal-shaped collar and cuffs, which made him look very magnificent. Matched with a tight black vest and skinny trousers, he looked gaudy and exaggerated.

This middle-aged man had brown hair and blue eyes, a thin face with a stubble. He was a very good-looking gentleman.

He looked at Meursault and said in a deep voice, "No matter what you do, make sure you find Ian Wright alive. If he's dead, bring him to me within an hour, preferably within fifteen minutes."

"Yes, Mr. Ambassador." Meursault didn't hide his unruliness but still kept his head lowered.

The scene shattered, and Klein frowned.

Mr. Ambassador?

This matter actually involves other countries?

Judging by the style of the shirt, the ambassador is most likely the ambassador of the Intis Republic to Backlund.

Ian is only a teenage boy...

That gentleman is able to channel spirits, or at least he has someone around him who can do so...

Klein thought for a moment, then constructed another sentence for the dream divination.

"The reason for finding Ian Wright."

In the grayish blurry dream, Klein once again saw the middleaged gentleman from before.

He stared at Meursault and said in a low voice, "You don't need to know why. Just heed my instructions.

"I gave you the potion and money to become the person in power behind the Zmanger gang; not for you to raise questions, but for you to do things!

"Yes... You only need to know that Ian Wright might be involved in an item of great importance."

As the scene faded away, Klein once again exited the dream.

An item of great importance... I really can't tell, Ian... What could it be... Potion... So Meursault is actually a Beyonder. It's no wonder that his combat skills were so powerful and terrifying. He should be a Beyonder adept in this field... As these thoughts crossed his mind, Klein felt exhausted. It seemed that responding to his own request had consumed too much of his spirituality.

If he wanted to have his mediumship standards restored to what it was previously, he estimated that it would only happen when he was a Sequence 7.

After ending the ritual and dispelling the wall of spirituality, Klein looked at Meursault's corpse and carefully observed it for a long time.

Finally, he saw specks of spiritual radiance converging at the wound on his opponent's throat, slowly congealing into a piece.

Carefully grabbing it, Klein pulled out a dark red object that looked like jelly from Earth.

Is this the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Meursault? I wonder what kind of Sequence potion it is... That's easy to determine. I'll get the answer by doing a divination above the gray fog... Theoretically speaking, the Beyonder characteristic of LowSequence Beyonders will be able to imbue a person with the corresponding powers, even without the supplementary ingredients. However, one can easily lose control and go insane on the spot after consuming it... Nearly all the supplementary ingredients for low Sequence potions lack spirituality... Klein's thoughts ran wild before he finally forced himself to focus.

A corpse was now in front of him. It gave him a headache thinking about what he should do next.

Meursault's body lay there, his eyes wide open, as if he still had a murderous look in them.

The wound that had severed half his throat was originally thin, but with the condensation of the Beyonder characteristic, it had expanded by quite a bit and became much more mangled.

At the same time, the phenomenon of incontinence after death made his lower body reek of a stench.

Klein held onto the crimson jelly-like object, feeling troubled about what he should do next.

He had three general choices. The first was to clean up the scene, deal with his wounds, and to report it to the police in the name of legitimate self-defense. The second was to wait deep into night, throw the corpse into some sewer, and pretend that nothing had happened. The third was to immediately give up his current identity, flee to another borough, and change his name again.

The problem with the first option was that Klein was still an illegal resident with skeletons in his closet. Reporting it to the police could easily lead to discovering a problem with his identity. As for the second option, other than being constantly worried that the corpse would be found and that the police would come knocking on his door, there was another hidden danger.

When the ambassador behind Meursault confirms the disappearance or death of his subordinate, he would definitely send someone else to 15 Minsk Street again. When that happens, Klein would be facing perhaps a Sequence 7 and/or Sequence 6 enemy. He was facing a faction that might very well be a country, a powerful country.

The third option seemed to be the wisest and safest option that allowed him to avoid all the risks, but there was also a downside, and that was that the portrait of Klein was likely to be posted, making him wanted. Furthermore, it would be a portrait of his undisguised self which Mrs. Sammer next door, his neighbor Lawyer Jurgen, and others would describe. Once the wanted notice was published in the corresponding

newspapers, even if it was limited to the greater Backlund area, Klein would very likely be recognized by Daly and the other Nighthawks. That would make the problem become even more troublesome.

As this matter involved Ince Zengwell and Sealed Artifact 0-08, it was highly likely that he would be pursued by an expert at the level of a high-ranking deacon.

Of course, the third option had a separate branch which was, of course, to hide the body and dump the evidence into the sewers, and then try to escape. However, there was also the risk of becoming wanted when the ambassador couldn't find Klein. He could order the members of the Zmanger gang to call the police and use the official forces of Backlund to search—and if he could track Klein down, that would be the same as the second option.

After thinking about it, Klein quickly came to a decision: *Divination...*

Of course, he was inclined towards a particular option already, the lesser of two evils. The first option was relatively less risky, and it allowed him to take the initiative to a certain extent. Through exposure, he could attract the attention of the official factions and suppress the Ambassador's subsequent actions from being too maniacal.

He took out a piece of paper and wrote a divination statement. After that, Klein took out a spirit pendulum from his left wrist, causing the topaz pendant to naturally hang down over the surface of the paper.

"I should make a police report. "I
should make a police report."

...

After he finished his silent incantation, he saw the spirit pendulum rotating clockwise with weak amplitudes and a relatively high frequency.

This indicated a positive response!

After divining the other two choices in turn and obtaining a negative answer from both of them, Klein no longer hesitated and began to deal with the scene.

He put on a pair of black gloves and began to search the corpse. He found a sharp dagger, a small stack of cash, a pack of cigarettes, a lighter, and some miscellaneous items.

Klein put the rest of the items back in place, took off his gloves, held the dagger in his hand, and stabbed it into Meursault's throat wound, destroying its original shape.

Then, he wore his gloves and let Meursault grab the dagger.

After doing all of this, Klein gathered together the Meursault's Beyonder characteristic, the self-made charms, the tarot cards, the blood-stained contract, the paper on which the divination was written, and the various materials he carried around with him, and put them in a paper bag.

Then, he summoned himself in a ritual and transformed into a special spirit.

Carrying Azik's copper whistle, he felt himself become stronger and more corporeal. Klein picked up the paper bag, ended the summoning, and returned to the world above the gray fog.

He placed the items from reality behind The Fool's high back chair for the time being, leaving Azik's copper whistle as well. Then he relaxed himself as he stimulated the sensation of descending rapidly and re-entered his own body.

The reason why Klein didn't burn the blood-stained contract and the piece of paper on which he had written the divination statement was because he was afraid that after the report was sent to the police, the matter would be transferred to a special department, and a powerful Beyonder would engage in divination pertaining to the situation.

However, with the gray fog's interference, even if the Eternal Blazing Sun were to personally descend, "He" wouldn't be able to obtain a productive answer.

This was also the reason why Klein placed his weekly review and summary above the gray fog after his spirituality was greatly enhanced after advancing to Sequence 8.

Right now, he couldn't afford to take on more suspicion and deeper investigations!

After removing the wall of spirituality, the wind that suddenly stirred blew away the remaining smell of the ritualistic materials. The items related to the domain of mysticism and Beyonders that were left behind on Klein's body and in the entire house were the candles that were silently burning in front of him.

But this time, he chose ordinary candles. Since he was praying and summoning himself, there was no need to be so meticulous.

And in a family, having candles was a very normal thing that matched the era, even if he was the only bachelor in the family.

After extinguishing the candles and returning them to their original spot, Klein took out his golden pocket watch, snapped it open, and estimated the number of minutes since Meursault's death and added the minimum amount of time it would take for the police to send people to investigate and report back.

He wanted to ensure that even if a Beyonder came to investigate, an hour would have passed since Meursault's death.

In mysticism and in the domain of spirit-channeling, this was an important time point. Beyond it, the information available was very limited and vague. For example, one could discover, through mediumship, that the person who killed Meursault was Sherlock Moriarty; however, they couldn't get the specifics of the death.

As for whether or not his opponents could divine if Beyonders were involved, Klein wasn't worried at all, because the main factors involved (the bloodied template contract) were above the gray fog.

Even his premonition and combat abilities would also be obscured as the opponent's divination would definitely point towards the mysterious space above the gray fog, and would certainly suffer from interference.

Fortunately, I'm also a professional... It feels like I've really become Moriarty... Klein re-examined the scene, making sure that there were

no problems, and began to walk with his eyes fixed on his pocket watch.

After the estimated time, he put on his gold-rimmed glasses and waited for a few minutes before he opened the door and went out.

The sky in Backlund had already gone dark, and the gas lamps on the street lit up the rain.

As a middle-class neighborhood, Minsk Street was often patrolled by the police. Klein waited for a while, then spotted the target and went up to meet them.

They were two low-ranking constables with only one chevron on their Paulette. They held guns, batons, and were holding up an umbrella while looking around.

“Officers! A criminal attacked me!” Klein shouted with great skill.

His unkempt appearance made the two constables place importance on the matter. They each took out their batons and looked warily to the side.

“Where’s the criminal?” the round-faced, brown-eyed cop asked in a deep voice.

Klein pointed to his house.

“He sneaked into my home and tried to kill me!

“In the fight, I accidentally stabbed him to death!”

Stabbed him to death... The two constables exchanged looks and looked at Klein with scrutiny.

“Take us there.”

“Alright!” Klein acted like he had just survived a disaster as he led the two officers to 15 Minsk Street, took out his key, and opened the door.

The two police constables first saw the chaotic scene before noticing the corpse laying on the ground. They noticed the hideous wound on the deceased’s throat, and noticed a bloody dagger.

“Watch the scene, I’ll return to the station and report it to the inspector,” another constable said to his round-faced, browneyed colleague.

“Alright.” The round-faced, brown-eyed constable cast his gaze on at Klein, his face and body language revealing his wariness and caution.

After a while, a sergeant dressed in black-and-white checkered uniform with three chevrons on his epaulet arrived with the constable from before and two other subordinates.

The constables investigated the scene and while searching for clues, the sergeant with a short brownish-yellow beard under his chin brought Klein to the side and began asking some preliminary questions.

“Name.”

“Sherlock Moriarty. This is my rental receipt for half a year.” Klein had long prepared all of this.

The sergeant gave him a casual look and continued asking, “What’s your occupation?”

“Private detective,” answered Klein frankly.

The sergeant frowned and said, “Do you know the deceased? Do you know why he attacked you?”

“I know him. His name is Meursault, and he’s the executioner of the Zmanger gang.” Klein didn’t wait for the sergeant to ask any further questions as he continued, “I had previously accepted a job from Ian Wright who asked me to investigate his former employer, Detective Zreal Victor Lee. This matter happened to be related to the Zmanger gang and Meursault.

“I tailed him and found out that he was secretly meeting a gentleman who appeared to be of significant standing. Meursault addressed him as Mr. Ambassador.” After saying that, Klein was unsurprised to see the sergeant’s expression change.

“Ambassador... Do you know his name?” the sergeant asked in a deep voice.

“I don’t know, but if I saw his picture, I’d definitely recognize him,” Klein told the truth. “This morning, Meursault came to me and asked me to seek Ian Wright. On the basis of my professional ethics as a private detective, I refused him, and when I got home in the evening, I was attacked and almost killed by him. Thankfully, I’m still quite skilled at combat and was sufficiently quick to react.”

The sergeant thought for a moment and asked for details of the fight. Klein recounted the fight from beginning to end nearly in its entirety, changing his premonition to a reaction, then changing the contract template he had thrown in the fight into a dagger that Meursault had dropped.

“Yea... Follow us back to the police station and wait for the autopsy results, the results of the on-site investigation, and inquiries from the relevant parties involved.” The sergeant’s thoughts wasn’t on the case anymore, clearly acting rather perfunctory.

Right now, he only had one thought in his mind:

This was an important case involving foreign ambassadors!

He had to report it immediately!

In his daze, he suddenly thought of a question and quickly added, “What’s your faith?”

“God of Steam and Machinery,” Klein replied without hesitation.

The Backlund headquarters of the Church of Storms was in the Cherwood Borough, so cases involving Beyonders were often referred to them, with one exception—the people involved were not believers of the Lord of Storms.

In order to not encounter the Nighthawks, Klein had no choice but to let the Goddess down.

Empress Borough. In an unremarkable house.

Xio and Fors took a seat at random and examined the writing on the blackboard. Like always, Mr. A was sitting quietly, alone on the sofa at the front in his hooded robe, looking down at the crowd from a high vantage point.

Sequence 8 Sheriff potion formula. 450 pounds... Xio silently read the familiar content as she inwardly let out of sigh of relief.

The situation she feared the most was the lack of a seller when she had finally amassed the money with great difficulty!

I received 400 pounds from the split, plus my original savings of 150 pounds, that's enough... However, I'd definitely need a huge sum of money for the main ingredient... Ah right, maybe I can change circles and see if there are any Beyonders who are interested in this formula... Xio suddenly felt invigorated, and she realized that she had found a way to make a fortune.

Frankly speaking, there was no way she would leak the formula if she wasn't in desperate need for money to buy the materials to concoct the potion. On the one hand, most people always hoped that there were fewer Beyonders in their own Sequences, and on the other hand, the price of the corresponding ingredients would be raised significantly if there were many competitors who bid up the prices of the ingredients. It was the same with the subsequent potions.

After some serious thought, Xio slowly became nervous again, because it was normal for a recipe to be placed on sale for a long time without being sold.

Moreover, the Arbiter pathway belonged to the royal family and the military. All aspects were strictly controlled, and the leaked ones came from a small number of destitute nobles. There were hardly any complete formulas for the low to mid Sequences. Often, only one or two of them were complete and compounded with the knowledge that the main ingredients were controlled and difficult to obtain. Beyonders who chose this Sequence were rather rare.

Xio had been in some mysticism circles in Backlund for a long period of time, but she hadn't found an Arbiter apart from herself. On the one hand, the others might have concealed it well, but on the other hand, that might also explain the problems faced in this Sequence pathway.

Phew, but compared to Fors, I'm lucky enough. She hasn't encountered any of the subsequent recipes for Apprentice all this time... Xio saw Mr. A's attendant approaching and wrote a note saying that she was purchasing the Sheriff's recipe.

Before long, she was led to the study on the first floor. Before entering, she took a hooded robe from the attendant and covered herself with it.

The seller in the study was dressed in the same way, so they couldn't see each other's faces clearly.

"This is the formula to the Sheriff potion. Where's my money?" the seller asked with a hoarse voice as he pressed a piece of paper on the desk.

Xio pulled out the cash that she had long counted numerous times and pushed it to the seller.

After checking the authenticity of the notes and the total sum, the seller finally released the potion formula he held.

Xio immediately took one step forward and grabbed the note.

Her eyes swept straight to the main ingredients as they were of great importance.

"A pair of Terror Demon Worm's eyes. Silver War Bear's right palm."

Beyonder items I know of, but I've never seen them being sold... Xio sighed and walked out of the study and took off her robe.

Back in the living room, she sat beside Fors. Having fulfilled her wish, she slowly began to worry about the unknown honorary name and the evil spirit that might be haunting her.

10, no, 20, no, 30 to request for someone skilled in exorcism to do a purification ritual for me. Xio made up her mind, and after exchanging a few whispered words with Fors, she beckoned for Mr. A's attendant.

After the end of the free communication break, she saw her request appear as an additional entry on the blackboard.

“Suspected haunting of evil spirits. Requesting the help of friends who specialize in exorcism. 30 pounds.”

After a while, Mr. A’s attendant came to the two of them and quietly invited them to the living room on the first floor.

There was a man wearing a white mask inside. He looked at the two people who were wearing loose robes that concealed their genders and chuckled.

“Let me introduce myself first, so that you won’t doubt my

ability.”

“No, no, we trust Mr. A,” Xio, with her hood over her face, said before Fors could open her mouth.

She deliberately suppressed her voice to prevent her childish voice from revealing her identity.

The man with the white mask spread his hands and laughed.

“This is my habit, I am a believer of the Sun. As you know, this is not common in Backlund, or in the entire kingdom.

“It is only through moments like this that I can live as my true self.”

Due to the great conflict between the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun and the Church of Storms, the former had never been able to obtain the right to proselytize in the Loen Kingdom.

“A believer of the Sun?” Fors’s languid look instantly vanished. “This is the first time I’m seeing a living believer of the Sun! Eh... It’s not like I can meet diplomats of higher standing.”

“Then, should I feel honored?” The man in the white mask spread his arms wide and held them up in a gesture of praise for the Sun.

Instead of answering his question, Fors smiled and said, “In terms of exorcism and purification, the attendant of the Sun is a professional. Our hearts are at rest, so we can begin.”

The man who claimed to be a believer of the Sun didn't drone on. He took out a badge with the symbol of the "Sun" on it and placed it on the round table in the center. Then, he used a dualistic ritual method to light up two candles.

After finishing the preparatory steps one step at a time, he chanted with a loud and abnormally pious tone.

"The Sun that is Eternal,

"You are an Inextinguishable Light.

"You are the Embodiment of Order

"I pray to you,

"Please bestow me with your cleansing glow.

"Please repel the evils spirits in this body."

...

Amid the echoing Hermes incantation, Xio and Fors saw bright light burst out from the Sun's emblem, bursting in a pure and warm manner.

It was endless, like the tide, as the light surged towards the two of them, engulfing them simultaneously.

Nearly a minute later, everything was restored to normal. All Xio and Fors felt was warmth, finding the warmth very comfortable and relieving. It was like soaking in a hot spring, or having gone sunbathing.

...

Cherwood Borough. Rice Police Station.

Klein was sitting on a low bench with a group of thieves and drunkards. It looked very disgraceful.

Suddenly, he felt warmth on the back of his hand as the coldness of the Backlund night was dispelled quite significantly.

Lowering his head, Klein realized that the four black dots representing the mysterious space above the gray fog didn't appear.

Who's being so kind? To know that I was feeling a little cold just now... he mumbled half jokingly and half-curious.

As a former inspector, he looked at the thief on the left who was handcuffed to the pipe, then at the drunkard on the right who could vomit at any moment but kept yelling about hitting people. He sighed at his present predicament and wasn't sure when he would be free from this.

There should be another test after this and then I'll be fine once I pass it... I hope the police will have their attention on the ambassador and the Zmanger gang, and ignore my origins as a puny detective. In theory, there's a high chance for that. As long as Mrs. Sammer, Mr. Jurgen, and the others don't say anything of interest to the police... Yes, they have only just met me so it's impossible for them to know too much...

Meursault's Beyonder characteristic was taken away by me and was hidden above the gray fog. He didn't leave behind anything strange, so no one would able to discover that he used to be a Beyonder and have questions about my strength... Hmm... More than an hour has passed...

In his self-encouragement, Klein saw the officer with the short brownish-yellow beard walking towards him.

"Sherlock Moriarty, come with me to the interrogation room," the sergeant said without further explanation.

Here it comes... Klein stood up and followed.

After going around a corner, the sergeant stopped in front of an iron door and gestured for Klein to enter.

Klein took a deep breath before exhaling. He yanked the handle and opened the door.

It was a small room with thick walls and a small table in the middle. There were chairs on both sides of the table.

Under the elegant gas lamp's illumination, Klein identified the interrogator as a man who wore a black shirt, a rather uncommon sight.

He didn't wear a vest but wore a black coat that wasn't part of the usual formal attire. He had thin eyebrows and cold blue eyes. His face was cut, looking rigid while lacking any gentleness.

The man pointed the chair opposite him and said in a deep voice, "I ask, you answer."

Before he finished his sentence, Klein felt an unimaginable suppressive force on him. He felt that an electric current was tearing through his mind that lashed at his soul with a barbed whip.

This "feeling" was painful and numbing, as though it stemmed from deep within the brain. It was barely resistible, and all he could do was tremble and have his knees buckle.

Klein nearly fell to the ground as he hurriedly held onto the table and sat down. His temples felt a throbbing pain.

This... this is the result of Beyonder powers... Ordinary people might've thought of it as a psychological problem caused by nervousness and the authority of the interrogator opposite them, but Klein had clearly identified that this was a result of Beyonder powers, powers that could directly attack the mind of others!

He quickly recalled the information he had seen before and quickly confirmed the target of his suspicion.

Arbiter pathway, Sequence 7: Interrogator!

Has the matter been transferred to a special department of the military? Klein thought with some relief.

As long as it isn't the Nighthawks, everything's fine.

"Identify the ambassador who met Meursault from these photographs." The cold and unyielding man in black spread out eight black-and-white photos on the small table.

Klein felt as if the electric whip in his mind was being lifted high, and the warning of extreme pain made it so he didn't dare to lie.

Of course, there was no need for Klein to lie. After a moment of identification, he pushed a photo in the direction of the interrogator. It

was a middle-aged gentleman who wore ostentatious clothing and looked rather charming.

The interrogator glanced at it, but didn't make any response. He once again asked, "Were your previous statements the truth?"

Klein felt like he was being forced into a dream. He kept his mind clear and rational, and he didn't yield to the "whip" in his mind as he sincerely replied, "Nothing but the truth."

The interrogator leaned forward with his hands on the small table and said, "When was the last time you met Ian Wright?"

"Yesterday, yesterday morning," Klein said with great difficulty, "I tailed Meursault and found the body of Detective Zreal. As I didn't want to deal with the police, I took Ian to identify the body and told him to call the police. Zreal's body was located at the sewer entrance at the bottom of Iron Carbon Street in East Borough."

After a brief silence, the interrogator finally nodded his head.

Klein immediately felt the enormous pressure disappear along with the "whip" in his mind.

"You may leave now," he said without a trace of emotion in his voice.

Klein stood up and opened the door, not masking the frailty in his gait.

He found it more tiring than fighting Meursault. If he made the slightest mistake, his spirit would've been completely crushed, and he would obediently answer any question that the other party asked.

No, if it wasn't for the fact that my spirit is special and how it's been subjected to the test of raving and screaming for a long period of time, allowing me to maintain my calm and rationality under certain circumstances, I would've most likely had a mental breakdown just now... Klein walked back down the corridor, his back feeling cold.

At this moment, the sergeant from before came over and said, "Come with me to fill out some forms. Lawyer Jurgen is waiting to bail you out."

Phew... Klein secretly exhaled and completely relaxed. (He knew that the danger was over.)

Chapter 231: Losses

Klein met Jurgen Cooper in an office at the Rice Police Station. This young senior solicitor was still dressed formally as though he was always ready to go to a posh dinner party.

He wore a black double-breasted attire, a white shirt with a stiff collar, a huge bow tie, and bright leather boots, which made the policemen act very polite to him.

Jurgen held his half top hat and looked at Klein with his blue eyes while saying, "The formalities are over. You can leave if you pay the bail of ten pounds."

"Thank you." Klein didn't say anything more, but followed the good-looking but seemingly old-fashioned Jurgen to the police station's financial affairs office that was nearby, where he fished out his wallet and pulled out two five-pound notes.

He was grateful that he had all his cash—95 pounds—on him, or else he might've had to borrow it from his good neighbor, Jurgen.

Of course, the worst-case scenario would be if he had left the money at home. Klein wasn't certain how much of that would be left after the police searched the scene. Yet, he couldn't put it in the world above the gray fog, because it was possible that he needed to offer bribes to free himself.

At present, many newspapers and magazines were discrediting the police as being unsupervised, violent, corrupt, extortionary, and vicious. Klein didn't dare to believe it fully, but neither did he dare to doubt it. After all, Meursault's money could very well end up in the pockets of someone in the police station.

After paying the bail, Klein followed Jurgen out of the police station and shivered when hit by the humid, cold wind.

"After the case is closed, your bail will be returned to you. Of course, you can't expect them to voluntarily notify you. Yes... In a week, if no one notifies you that your presence is required back at the station, you can come here and ask for your bail to be returned. In theory, you could

still get appropriate compensation, if any, from the other party's estate." Jurgen walked over to a carriage parked nearby.

The rain that had poured down during the entire day had finally come to a stop, but the crimson moon remained hidden by the dark clouds. The only light that could be seen on the street was from the gas lamps.

"Alright." Klein almost believed that he would have to part with the ten pounds forever.

He couldn't help but calculate how much it cost him to take up Ian's job. He had been paid five pounds, but many pieces of furniture and tea sets were destroyed at his home. He either had to buy new ones or get someone to repair them for him. With the materials used, the cost of the carriage, and the cost of mending his clothes, the math seemed to imply that he would be losing money...

If I don't manage to get back the ten pounds worth of bail money, this would be a great loss! Well... the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Meursault is actually worth quite a bit of money... Klein got into the carriage and frowned slightly.

He had always thought that the private detectives who used their own residences as offices would, at most, not be entrusted with anything and wouldn't suffer any losses, but in the end...

Klein turned his head to look at Jurgen, who was sitting up straight, and he said with sincerity, "Thank you. Thank you for coming to bail me out. How much should I pay you?"

Jurgen nodded very formally and said, "This one's pro bono.

"I heard from Sergeant Faxine that you were involved in an incident. I believe that we'll have many opportunities to work together in the future."

There will be many opportunities to work together in the future... Klein couldn't help but laugh as he said, "Lawyer Jurgen, are you cursing me?"

Jurgen shook his head solemnly and said, "No, it's not what you think. It's very common for a private detective to have a fixed lawyer he works with."

Sir, you sure lack a sense of humor... even though you look rather young... Klein lampooned before saying with a smile, "Coincidentally, I'm in need of a lawyer to help me draw up an investment contract."

"Investment contract?" Jurgen asked in a slightly stunned tone.

"I know that this isn't part of the work of a private detective, but I happened to chance upon a good investment opportunity," Klein explained simply. "Lawyer Jurgen, how much would a contract cost according to your usual fees?"

"Generally, it's based on the total amount of the contract and the level of ease," Jurgen answered seriously.

"The total amount is one hundred pounds, the terms needed are..." Klein described his needs in detail, including a preemptive right, veto rights, and so on.

Jurgen thought hard for a few minutes before saying, "Two pounds. I'll give it to you Monday morning."

"Alright," Klein said no more regarding the matter. Instead, he began asking Jurgen information about the case that night.

On the way back to Minsk Street, Klein took the initiative to pay the carriage's fare of 3 soli. After bidding farewell to the young but serious lawyer, he walked back to his house.

He opened the door and when he saw the messy scene, his heart winced.

He never expected that he would start his detective business with a loss.

Just as Klein took off his coat and began working on cleaning up the mess, the doorbell rang.

He opened the door in puzzlement and saw Julianne, the maid from next door in a black-and-white skirt.

"Good evening, Mr. Moriarty. Mr. and Mrs. Sammer wish to invite you over to discuss something," Julianne said with a tone that had traces of fear.

Here it comes... the problem regarding compensation... Klein revealed a smile and said, “Alright.”

He changed into a clean coat and followed the maidservant next door. Luke Sammer and his wife, Stelyn Sammer were sitting on a sofa in the living room.

The stout Luke, with a pencil-thin mustache, stood up and extended his hand as he said with a chuckle, “Good evening, Mr. Moriarty. I only just learned that you were a private detective. That’s quite unbecoming as a neighbor.”

“No, it was my fault. I didn’t know if I was suited for this career and might find other jobs at any moment,” Klein said as he shook the hand of the male master. “I’m very sorry for what happened tonight. I’ll compensate you.”

“It’s just an accident,” Luke said reassuringly.

The blonde, blue-eyed, and pretty Stelyn asked out of curiosity, “Did you really kill the intruder? Heh, you must want black tea, right?”

Klein nodded.

“Perhaps he was just a thief.”

He didn’t mention that the problem stemmed due to one of his jobs, in order to prevent the Sammer couple from having any unpleasant feelings.

Since the police didn’t inform them, there’s no need for me to do anything unnecessary... Klein silently added.

Luke Sammer laughed and said, “You must possess excellent combat skills. As a neighbor, I feel very safe. Perhaps we will have matters to entrust you in the future.”

Klein seemingly gave a self-deprecating laugh.

“Actually, I was almost killed.”

“Regardless, you were the ultimate victor,” Luke said.

After chatting about this topic for a while, Stelyn picked up a porcelain teacup and took a sip.

“I’m very curious about how many commissions a private detective receives a week, and how much can they earn?” Klein didn’t try to hide anything as he laughed.

“It depends on the situation. Just like when there are good and bad harvests in the farms. I earned five pounds and five soli last week. But after last night’s incident, I might have made a loss.”

As if she didn’t hear the latter half of his words, she continued, “If you can maintain this income, you’ll get a pretty good life in Backlund’s Cherwood district at 5 pounds a week. There’s no need to sublet another room, and you can hire a maid to do odd jobs, listen to a symphony every other week, or go to the theatrical opera once. Once a week, you can play tennis or squash, join a reading salon, and go to a nice restaurant. Of course, if you’re already preparing for marriage, you need to save a little money. A weekly salary of five pounds is still a little short of being truly decent.”

“Then, what is the required weekly salary to be truly decent?” Klein asked.

“Seven pounds, at least.” Stelyn lifted her chin slightly.

Klein turned to Luke and said casually, “I heard from your wife that you work at Coim, but I’m not sure what its main business

is.”

“Anthracite and charcoal,” Luke answered with a smile.

It’s no wonder you became a member of the Soot Reduction Association... Klein pondered for a moment and said, “In Backlund, how big of a salary does a manager receive? It’s seldom mentioned in the newspapers and magazines.”

“Haha, it depends on the industry, as well as the actual position’s job scope. Backlund Bank’s best manager earns 5000 pounds a year, but for me, it’s about 430 to 440 pounds including bonuses,” Luke said casually.

That’s about eight pounds a week... No wonder... Before Klein could open his mouth, Stelyn Samuel grumbled, “Actually, we could’ve lived in the suburbs, and I’ll have a garden and a lawn. Luke would

then be able to have a stable and buy a new carriage and the two foals he's been eyeing all this time, but he would waste too much time on his commute to work. That would be even more valuable."

A new carriage including horses costs about a hundred pounds... Eight pounds a week is indeed impressive; unfortunately, it hasn't been long since I had a pay rise when... Klein could only smile in response.

After exchanging a few more pleasantries, he bade farewell and left, sighing to himself in his heart.

Mr. and Mrs. Sammer are still considered nice. If I had a mean landlord, I'd have had my deposit deducted and refunded and be asked to get lost after what happened tonight...

After returning home, Klein began laboring. He wasn't in a hurry to go above the gray fog to examine the warm current on the back of his hand, nor was he in a hurry to do divination because he was afraid that the military's special department was still keeping tabs on him.

He decided to go to the bar which Ian had described tomorrow night to buy a gun so as to deal with people who might assault him recklessly in desperation.

Klein even planned to find the means to hire a bodyguard, a powerful Beyonder bodyguard. This was so that first, he could take advantage of the opportunity to contact Beyonder circles without exposing himself, and second, it was because he was also afraid that the ambassador's next assailant would have the ability to hide from the military's special department.

Although it was a slightly comical thing for a Sequence 8 Beyonder—a vengeful evil spirit in hiding—to need a bodyguard, as safety was of paramount importance to Klein.

If the price is too high, I'll blow the copper whistle for Mr. Azik, which, of course, might be more dangerous... I don't know much about Sealed Artifact 0-08... After cleaning up the house, Klein silently muttered.

...

After the purification ceremony ended, the man in the white mask said to Xio and Fors,"No matter what kind of sinister spirit it is, it has

already been exorcised by me. Heh, if it has reached the level of an evil spirit that I'm unable to exorcise, it should've given a response. However, there was none."

As he spoke, he poured the water which had condensed on the emblem of the Sun into a small metal bottle and handed it to Xio.

"Sprinkle it in your room to ward off any remnants."

"Thank you." Xio paid him while feeling the pinch, but she felt a lot more relaxed.

Moments after she returned to the living room with Fors, the attendant delivered a note to them.

"Miss Arbiter, who has just bought the Sheriff formula, would you mind having a chat in the study? I might have what you need."

Who? How did that person know that I purchased the Sheriff recipe? Xio's dark green pupils contracted as she surveyed her surroundings in astonishment, but she didn't see anyone suspiciously watching her.

According to Mr. A, the transactions here should be very safe and confidential here... Finally, Xio couldn't help but look at the single sofa where Mr. A, whose face was covered by a hood, sat. He was still quietly sizing people up without revealing anything odd.

She nudged Fors with her elbow and whispered, "Should I go?"

Fors took the piece of paper, glanced at it, and replied without hesitation, "Go, at least you still have Mr. A watching. No one would dare to do anything to you, so you can take the opportunity to find out what the other party's goal is. Who knows? You might actually obtain the potion materials you want as a result?"

"That makes sense..." Xio, who was a very proactive person, immediately nodded to the attendant, followed him to the study, and finally, put on a hooded robe.

This hood can cover my entire face, so much so that I can't see the path in front of me... Having worn the hood, Xio opened the door and saw a man dressed in a tuxedo sitting behind a desk.

The man wore a golden mask that revealed his eyes, nostrils, mouth, and cheeks, but it was impossible to identify him.

The light brown eyes behind the golden mask shifted as the man pointed to the chair opposite the desk and said, "Have a seat."

His voice was deliberately hoarse; otherwise, there was nothing special about it.

Xio closed the door to the study, stuck her chest out and raised her head, and sat down in the designated position without feeling intimidated. She then asked, "Do you have the main ingredients for the Sheriff potion?"

The masked man chuckled and said, "Yes, I have the eyes of a Terror Demon Worm and the right palm of a Silver War Bear.

“In fact, that Sheriff potion formula you bought was sold on my behalf...”

No wonder... Xio was often mocked as a brainless person by her good friends, but to survive in the circle of Beyonders, in the gangs of the East Borough, and among the poor, she wasn’t a completely reckless person. She had the intuition for danger that was akin to a wild beast.

She asked in a deep voice, “Why are you doing this?”

“To select suitable helpers.” The masked man chuckled. “With your financial situation, it’ll be difficult for you to gather the money needed for these two Beyonder ingredients in a short period of time. Of course, you can sell the formula at other Beyonder gatherings, but please, believe me, this will bring you unnecessary danger. Our circles might not overlap, but I’m not the only person.”

Xio frowned and said, “Since you have such a massive organization and possess the formulas to the Sheriff and Arbiter potions, why do you need my help?”

“There are certain matters we do not wish to deal with ourselves. There are many reasons, but there’s no need for me to tell you that. And every Arbiter that embarks on the journey as a Beyonder by themselves has, more or less, some connection with the aristocracy. This is something we need,” the masked man explained, simply.

It seems like he doesn’t know about my origins, nor is he aware of my reputation in the East Borough... Xio relaxed a little.

The masked man continued, “Just treat it as additional missions beyond the Beyonder gatherings. I will give you some missions and pay you with the corresponding rewards. If you feel that it’s dangerous, you can reject them. This is a fair and free trade. Once you save up enough money, you can purchase the ingredients from me.”

This... Xio, who was still struggling with her financial situation, suddenly had her heart stir. She continued acting reserved for nine seconds before she said, “As long as I have the right to reject missions, I can consider it.”

“No problem.” The masked man laughed. “We can agree on where and how we’ll meet in the future. To make you feel at ease, we’ll concede the right to decide the details to you.”

“Alright.” Although Xio was still baffled and didn’t understand why the other party was offering her missions to perform, she still agreed.

At the very least, she couldn’t identify any obvious dangers at the moment.

...

Klein busied himself with buying chairs and tea sets and mending his clothes the whole of Sunday. He spent a total of 6 pounds 9 soli to restore the living room, the dining room, and himself to their original states.

What a loss. I hope that the police department compensates me for my losses from Meursault’s estate. Sigh, the chances are slim since it’s, at best, just a portion. Klein placed the invoices and receipts neatly in place, waiting for them to be used in the future.

Of course, in terms of income alone, he had made quite a killing. Meursault’s Beyonder characteristic was worth at least 300 pounds, or more.

The premise of all of this was that Klein had access to a circle of Beyonders.

After dinner, dressed in a turtleneck sweater, a solid-colored sweater, a grayish-blue worker’s coat, and a cap, Klein went out, once again, and made two transfers before arriving at Iron Gate Street in the area of the Backlund Bridge.

He saw Bravehearts Bar after taking a few steps. He saw a seemingly heavy black wooden door and a nearly two-meter-tall brawny man with his arms folded.

The brawny man sized up Klein, but he didn’t stop him from pushing open the door, but his throat moved when he heard the cheers inside.

This was when the bar was experiencing its peak business. Before Klein even entered, he felt a heat wave engulf him. He could smell the strong aroma of malt beer and hear a din.

Unsurprisingly, he saw two stages in the middle of the bar. One of them was having a rat-baiting with dogs competition, and the other stage had two boxers patiently waiting for the fight to begin.

The aroma of alcohol mixed with the smell of sweat emanated. Klein lifted his gold-rimmed glasses and pinched his nose. While protecting his belongings, he squeezed his way to the bar counter.

Before the bartender could say anything, he said, “One glass of Southville beer.”

This was the best beer that the Loen Kingdom produced.

“Five pence,” the bartender replied like clockwork.

Klein took out a handful of coins and counted out five pence before handing them over in exchange for a large wooden cup of golden beer. The aroma of the beer was alluring.

“In front of it, many beers can’t even be called alcohol and can only be considered as beverages.” The bartender chuckled.

Klein lifted up the cup and took a swig. It was cool and refreshing, first bitter and fragrant, but later, the flavor of malt burst out. It had a slightly sweet aftertaste.

After putting down the cup, he looked at the tiny white bubbles and took the opportunity to ask, “Where’s Kaspars Kalinin?”

The bartender stopped wiping the glass in his hand as he looked up and observed Klein for a few seconds before pointing to the side.

“Billiard room 3.”

In the spirit of not wasting anything, Klein carried the cup and walked to the third billiard room.

With just a light tap, he allowed the door to creak open.

The two men inside stopped and looked towards the door.

“I’m looking for Kaspars Kalinin.” Amidst the silence, Klein hurriedly added, “Old Geezer introduced me.”

Upon hearing this, a fifty-year-old man with a big nose and a linen shirt said in a deep voice, “Come in.”

He had a huge, twisted scar running from the corner of his right eye to the side of his mouth, and his nose was a typical brandy nose, one that almost completely red.

Klein slowly walked in with the cup in his hand and saw that Kaspars’s billiard opponent had put aside his cue stick like clockwork and left the room before closing the door behind him.

Kaspars Kalinin hobbled over and asked, “What do you want?”

“A powerful custom revolver and fifty rounds.” Klein took another sip of his Southville beer.

“3 pounds 10 soli.” Kaspars gave the price. “This will definitely be more expensive than a regular weapons store. The price includes the risks I have to undertake.”

“Deal.” Klein took five one-pound notes he prepared from his trouser pocket and counted them.

Kaspars checked for the notes’ authenticity before nodding.

“You’re more straightforward than you look. Give me five minutes.”

He put the notes on the billiard table, leaned against a crutch, and limped to the door.

After watching Kaspars leave, Klein glanced back at the currently trendy billiards and found it to be very similar to snooker on Earth.

It must be you, Emperor Roselle... He nearly lost his composure and laughed while shaking his head.

After a short wait, Kaspars pushed the door open and entered, carrying a package wrapped in brown paper and two five-soli notes.

Klein took the money and the item and opened it on the spot. His eyes caught the long, silvery barrel of a revolver. The grip seemed to be made of walnut wood.

In addition to that, there were fifty glistening rounds neatly placed in the box.

Klein tried the empty gun, loaded five rounds, stuffed the revolver into his underarm holster he bought some time back. Then, he gathered up the remaining bullets and looked up at Kaspars. He deliberated and asked, “If I wish to hire a good bodyguard, who should I look for?

“A very good one, the kind that exceeds human limitations.” Kaspars rubbed his red nose and his eyes turned cold.

He carefully examined Klein for two minutes, using his silence to create a terrible sense of oppression.

“I can make the query for you, but there’s no guarantee that someone will accept this mission.”

He seems to know more than one Beyonder... Klein smiled and said, “No matter what the result is, please allow me to express my gratitude in advance.”

Kaspars put away the bills on the billiard table and walked out again. It was a full ten minutes before he returned to his room. And by then, Klein had already finished his huge cup of Southville beer out of boredom.

“He wants to meet you before making a decision,” Kaspars said in a deep voice.

“No problem. I would also determine the difficulty of the mission if it were me.” Klein smiled and nodded.

He followed behind Kaspars who hobbled past the crowded boxing ring and into the kitchen of the bar.

Kaspars suddenly stopped and lightly knocked on a door. After gaining permission, he pushed it open and entered with Klein in tow.

It was a card room where more than ten people were playing Texas poker.

A man wearing a black vest and a white shirt slowly stood up after seeing Kaspars and Klein enter the room. The others who were playing cards stopped in their tracks and didn’t make a sound.

With a single glance, Klein frowned indiscernibly.

Apart from the man that had stood up, he noticed that all the other players had an indescribable sense of strangeness to them. Their faces were pale, and their eyes were like those of wild beasts.

Tapping his left molar twice, Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision.

His muscles tensed up abruptly, and he almost couldn't control his expression because the auras of those players were dark black!

That meant that, apart from the man who stood up, the ten plus people playing cards were all dead!

No, they weren't just dead, as the dead had no aura colors These were all zombies!

The feeling of rotting came over him, and the man in the white shirt and black vest walked in front of Klein.

His face was equally pale, and there seemed to be deep malice in his eyes.

The more he thought about how a living person was playing cards with more than ten corpses in a dimly lit room into the night, the more his scalp tingled.

Klein suppressed his instinctive fear and looked at the pale face, the malicious brown eyes, and the man who was about twentyeight years old that suffused madness. He pretended to be intimidated by the man's dominance and took a step back. During this time, Kaspars left the room and closed the door.

The man asked in a deep voice, "You're the one looking for a bodyguard?"

"...Yes." Klein gulped deliberately.

The man's strangeness made him feel fear, but it also brought him peace of mind.

The stronger the bodyguard, the safer he would be!

The pale-faced man in the black vest lifted his chin and asked, "Why are you looking for a bodyguard? How much are you

willing to pay for this?"

Klein didn't answer straight away. He thought for nearly twenty seconds before saying, "I'll tell you the details of the mission first. Give me a price after you assess it. If I can pay for it, or if I have an item of equivalent value, we would have ourselves a deal. Otherwise, I can only give up and look for someone else." The fierce-looking man didn't say a word. Instead, he nodded as a gesture for Klein to recount his story.

Klein deliberately looked at the zombies, treating them as normal card players. Then, he gave the man an inquisitive look saying: "Before I answer, do you want to kick these guys out of the room?"

"There's no need for that," the pale-faced man said in a deep voice.

Klein hesitated for a moment, then honestly said, "I offended a big shot who might have a country supporting him."

The room suddenly turned still and silent. The man, who had a hint of madness and malice in his eyes, froze on the spot as if he had turned into a plaster statue.

After nearly a minute, he slowly said, “This mission is priceless.

“Get out.”

Ah? Klein didn’t manage to react until the man turned and walked back to the card table. Only then did he realize that there was no deal.

You played cards with a bunch of zombies in the room and presented yourself as a person of high standing and strength. Yet, you were scared off just like that? You’re clearly a little crazy... Klein didn’t know whether to laugh or cry as he added, “The big shot doesn’t have that much freedom in Backlund.”

The man in the black vest ignored him and sat down again. The zombies began to hand out cards, look at their cards, and throw out chips.

Klein exhaled and backed out of the room only to see Kaspars Kalinin. He had been waiting outside with his brandy nose and hideous wound.

“We didn’t come to an arrangement.” Klein threw up his hands.

Kaspars didn’t show a look of surprise as he pondered for a few seconds before saying, “Did he request too high a price?”

“No, he finds the mission too difficult.” Klein didn’t hide the reason.

Kaspars frowned.

“Maric is the scariest person I know. He isn’t even afraid of bullets, and since he thinks the mission is difficult, I don’t think I can help you get in touch with other powerful people.” “What a pity.” Klein sighed.

Kaspars clenched his right fist and struck his left chest.

“May the Storm be with you.”

Then I’m dead... Klein said with a smile as he made the best out of it, “Thank you.

"You can try asking around for me. I'll pay you a fee. Yeah... I'll come again tomorrow night."

After receiving a positive answer, he left the Bravehearts Bar feeling slightly melancholic. He didn't even have the interest to play a game of billiards.

Was I being too honest? If I described the mission in a way that sounded simpler, Maric would've agreed... I just wonder how much money he would ask for... Sigh, it's not my style to let someone else face the danger for me through deceit... As a Beyonder, if I constantly go against my heart's true thoughts and my own principles, then I probably won't be far from losing control... Feeling mixed emotions, Klein changed carriages and returned to Minsk Street.

...

After washing up, Klein didn't waste any charcoal. He directly went to the bedroom and pulled the curtain to isolate the room from the outside world.

On the way back, he carefully thought for a while and discovered that the possible danger wasn't something that couldn't be resolved.

To the unknown ambassador, his primary and fundamental purpose is to find Ian Wright. The reason he sent people to deal with me was because he wished to obtain clues to finding Ian from me. If direct interrogation doesn't work, killing me and channeling my spirit could be considered... If I let him know that I can't find Ian either, he wouldn't take the risk to deal with a hired detective when the military's special department might be monitoring the situation.

Of course, my appearance and strength far exceeded his expectations, causing their operation to be exposed and causing them to suffer heavy setbacks. If I were the ambassador, I would definitely think about revenge and vent my anger, but it definitely wouldn't be now, not when the situation is so tense and turbulent... Yes, this is building on the premise that the ambassador has brains, and he isn't a good-for-nothing who got to his position through connections and only knows to act rashly... For him to be handling such an important matter, it must mean that he's still rather reliable...

In other words, the crux of the problem is Ian Wright's whereabouts!

Hmm... There's still some latent danger. Would the ambassador reveal to the military's special department that Meursault is a Beyonder after his failure? That would make them find my strength questionable, and use them to retaliate against me... This can be done easily with an offhand remark with no difficulty involved. I have to be on my guard...

Klein analyzed his situation and suddenly had the urge to kill the unknown ambassador.

However, just the thought of powerful Beyonders around him left him depressed.

I wonder if the messenger can accept my delegations without Mr. Azik's permission... Probably not... Should I pay close attention to this matter and find an opportunity to silence him? Since he sent someone to kill me, I wouldn't feel any psychological burden from killing him... Yes, I can consider setting a mission for the Tarot Club. Let's see if Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man have any solutions... Perhaps, a large sum of money can tempt that "Mr. A" or some other powerful Beyonders... Klein suddenly had an idea came to him as he thought of the Tarot Club.

With this idea in mind, he calmed down a lot. He found some paper and a pen and wrote the divination statement: "Ian Wright's whereabouts."

After confirming that there were no hidden Beyonders in the room, Klein looked at the curtain that shielded him from prying eyes. He recalled Ian's appearance and silently read out the divination sentence before leaning back into his chair.

He quickly entered a dream and saw a dark, small, run-down room in the dreamy world. There was a bunk bed and a floor mat that four people slept on.

Ian was curled up at the top of the bunk bed, sleeping soundly under an old satchel.

When the dream shattered, Klein opened his eyes and interpreted the revelation.

Living quarters like that only exist in the East Borough and the Backlund Bridge area, but it's an abnormally huge place. Even if all the police in Backlund are deployed, they still wouldn't be able to find it...

Ian was very careful. He didn't leave anything with me. Otherwise, I would've been able to find him through dowsing rod divination...

After a few minutes of consideration, Klein picked up the pen and added a paragraph to each of the divination statements, making it an excuse:

"I don't know Ian Wright's whereabouts. I haven't seen him since we found Zreal's body."

That piece of paper was left on the desk with a pen pressed against its edge.

After all was done, Klein got up and went back to his bed, making a quick, less obvious flick of the coin to make sure that no one was watching him.

After obtaining a negative answer, he quickly took four steps counterclockwise, chanted the incantation, and entered the world above the gray fog.

Within the ancient and towering palace, Klein couldn't be bothered to inspect the situation around him, and instead repeated the divination he had just done.

Seeing that the negative answer hadn't changed, he stopped feeling so nervous. Raising his head to the side, he realized that the core position of the newly added crimson star had been dyed with a sun-like gold.

"Is this the source of the warmth I felt?" Klein spread out his spirituality and gingerly touched it in response to the prayer.

A blurry scene quickly appeared in front of his eyes.

The petite lady he had tried to pull up above the gray fog was standing in front of an altar with a lady with slightly curled brown hair. A man wearing a white mask softly chanted the honorary name of the Eternal Blazing Sun, creating a warm and pure light.

Was she trying to get someone to do an exorcism? Klein almost laughed.

At that moment, he finally understood the reason behind the previous situation. It wasn't that someone had penetrated the gray fog and locked onto him. It was similar to Justice and company reciting his honorary name before making a prayer. And after the gray fog received the message, it automatically give him feedback. However, since it wasn't a prayer, the illusory, overlapping voices ended up becoming a warm current.

Notification. This is a notification, and not something that can cause harm or influence... Klein made a definite judgment.

At the same time, he was roughly certain of one thing. The way the mysterious space above the gray fog connected with Justice and the others wasn't absolutely abnormal or above the rules of this world. It still suffered particular restrictions that could cause effects of varying degrees by using specific methods.

Klein continued watching the scene before him and listened to the voice speaking. He was surprised to find that it lasted longer than ever before.

Before this, he wouldn't be able to take the initiative to spy on the corresponding target of the crimson stars, unless the other party had prayed for it, and only then would he be able to receive the corresponding scene.

In another situation, when he gave his feedback, he would be able to see the scene and hear synchronized voices at the same time. However, once the response ended, he would no longer be able to gain any additional information.

Now, it was like watching a long video whose footage was filled with mosaicked reality TV footage.

He saw the petite lady talking to a man in a golden mask in the study, heard her companions address her as Xio, and realized that she was looking for the Beyonder potion corresponding to the Sheriff's potion.

It wasn't until the two women returned home that Klein felt regretful that he failed to identify their address. The "recording" thus came to an end.

Watching the gradually dissipating gold colors, he nodded his head thoughtfully. He vaguely understood why such an anomaly had appeared.

In other words, the power of purification helped me maintain the corresponding passageway? Xio's thirty pounds was worth it... I wonder when I'll be able to maintain it myself... Klein shook his head and smiled. He took out a pen and a paper to continue to divine Ian Wright's whereabouts.

It was the same dream divination, but this time Klein saw more.

The first scene was still the small, dark, squalid room with Ian Wright sleeping soundly on a bunk bed.

The second scene was the same sewer they had both gone to. Ian squatted in front of Zreal's mutilated body, reached out with his hand to rub the two rows of white teeth, and removed one of them.

The third scene was a busy and noisy street. The passersby were all dressed in plain clothes, some of which that could be described as old and tattered.

In the middle of the street, there were gardens and lawns, surrounded by low chimneys that were puffing out smoke. Ian, in his old overcoat and round hat, warily watched as he entered the telegraph office not far from the center of the street. Diagonally across it was the mall entrance to the steam metro.

The image quickly turned transparent. Klein opened his eyes, tapped his index finger on the edge of the long bronze table and made a preliminary judgment.

From that tooth and the telegram, it seems that Zreal and Ian aren't just a detective duo that found themselves involved in a dangerous situation. They have an organization behind them!

I should be able to determine where the third scene is...

Klein was in no hurry to deeply analyze it, as he didn't want to stay too long above the fog.

Leaving the high back chair belonging to The Fool, he went to a corner, rummaged through the paper bag that he had been placed there previously, and found Meursault's Beyonder characteristic.

Holding the crimson, jelly-like object, Klein sat down again and wrote a new divination statement: "The corresponding potion name."

As he silently recited the statement, he held onto the Beyonder characteristic with one hand and the piece of paper with the divination

statement in the other. With the help of Cogitation, he fell into a deep sleep.

In the gray, dreamy dream, the ambassador who was dressed to the nines, appeared again before Klein with his thin, stubbly face.

Holding a bottle of crimson liquid, he said to Meursault, “Drink it, drink this Hunter potion, and you’ll rule the Zmanger gang. Of course, money is also indispensable, as Emperor Roselle once said—a stick in one hand and a carrot in the other.”

“Hunter? Backlund is a huge metropolitan city...” Meursault frowned and asked curiously.

To someone illiterate like him, hunters were associated with the wilderness and animals.

The middle-aged ambassador chuckled and said, “The biggest city is the largest dark forest.

“Here, everyone has two identities. One, the prey, and the other, the hunter.

“Even the weakest hunter is a hunter. It’s possible for them to harm stronger prey.

“Go, join this magnificent hunt.”

...

The scene shattered and turned into countless specks of light. Klein looked down at the crimson Beyonder characteristic in his hand and said to himself silently, *So it’s the Hunter potion. It’s no wonder Meursault was so good at fighting. He even used a blowpipe to shoot poison darts.*

It’s no wonder how he was able to track me here...

However, he doesn’t seem to fully understand the essence of being a Hunter. He didn’t set any traps ahead of time or use any weapons. He didn’t put his advantages to use... This is partly because he didn’t know that I’m also a Beyonder, one that happens to be a Sequence 8. He underestimated me. It’s also evident that he only recently consumed the potion...

The Hunter pathway is both wielded by the former Intis royal family, the Sauron family, and the Feysac Empire's rulers, the Einhorn family, as well as the secret organization, the Iron and Blood Cross Order, which appeared in the past two to three centuries. Taking into account his attire, that ambassador's identity can essentially be confirmed... a high-ranking diplomat of the Intis Republic, an ambassador of the Loen Kingdom...

I wonder what that important item he's trying to get his hands on is...

As his mind churned, Klein wrapped himself in his spirituality and began the rapid descent.

As soon as he returned to his room, he immediately checked his surroundings vigilantly, but he didn't notice any unusual changes.

Phew. Klein let out a silent breath. He felt a bit more confident that he would be able to convene the members of the Tarot Club on time tomorrow afternoon.

He rummaged through the map of Backlund that he had bought on the steam locomotive, looking for a telegraph office that was along the subway line, one that wasn't far from the middle of the street.

There were only a few subway lines in Backlund, so Klein quickly identified three targets: one in West Borough, one in St. George Borough, and one at the junction of East Borough and the Backlund Bridge.

He recalled how most of the pedestrians in his dream were dressed to determined their socioeconomic statuses and arrived at the final answer.

The third spot!

The place where the East Borough intersected with the Backlund Bridge!

Sometimes, interpreting a revelation requires a plethora of practical knowledge and the ability to infer... Klein mocked himself, walked to the desk, and added another sentence after the previous statement, adding more to the contents written on the piece of paper.

I don't know where Ian is. I haven't seen him since we discovered Zreal's corpse. However, I learned through my own channels that Ian Wright had appeared at the telegraph office on Bacardi Street.

After he finished writing, Klein didn't fold the piece of paper and put it away. Nor did he burn it with his spirituality. Instead, he allowed it to remain spread out on the desk, freely revealing its contents.

After giving it a deep look, Klein went back to the bed and took off his clothes to sleep.

Outside the tightly closed curtains, the crimson moon peeked out from the layers of clouds, shining brightly and perfectly.

...

In a house at Hillston Borough.

Fors, who didn't sleep with Xio, sat up suddenly and put her hands to her head.

Her relatively pretty face was extremely twisted as if she was a devil.

Fors pressed against her ears and constantly tossed about in bed, as though she was resisting the illusory muttering.

Sweat trickled down her forehead, and veins bulged on the back of her hands.

Her body randomly tensed up or rolled. Her originally teasing and languid pale blue eyes were filled with pain.

In the depths of those pupils, countless layers of light and shadows seemed to appear.

"No!" Fors finally couldn't hold it in anymore as she let out a low tragic cry.

Her hands stopped covering her ears and resorted to yanking at her hair, as though she was going to fight pain with pain.

After a few minutes of writhing, she finally stopped.

She released her hands, looked at the handful of slightly curled brown hair, and weakly laughed at herself.

“I lied to Xio, telling her that the murmurs every full moon don’t have much of a negative effect on me... At least losing hair is a serious concern...”

With difficulty, Fors sat up and looked at the curtain that half covered the window. Through it, she could see the dreamy crimson moon outside.

“It’s getting worse each and every time. Will I lose control the next time because of this...” Fors could no longer suppress the weakness that she had buried deep in her heart.

She had attempted to separate herself from the bracelet that allowed people to teleport through the spiritual world, but it no longer resulted in the disappearance of the murmurs during a full moon.

She had tried to take sedatives, had tried chanting the name of the God of Steam and Machinery, had tried some ritualistic magic, but it hadn’t changed the fact that she was gradually slipping into the abyss.

“If only I could understand what the murmurs are saying... I wish to die in the know, and not be buried clueless... P-perhaps, I might be able to hear it clearer after advancing to Sequence 8? But I’ve never encountered anyone selling the Trickmaster potion formula.” Fors looked out the window in a daze as her eyes were dyed red by the moonlight.

...

On Monday morning, Klein woke up early from his restless sleep and got out of bed.

He went to his desk and began to draw the curtains and open the window to let the light and wind into the room.

At that moment, he caught sight of the paper on the desk at the corner of his eye.

It was facing the window, maintaining its original spot.

However, Klein clearly remembered that before he slept, this piece of paper was facing the chair and the bed!

It had flipped over and changed orientation after a night’s sleep!

Klein's pupils constricted as he abruptly reached out and pulled the curtains open. He saw that the oriel windows were still shut tight, not letting even a waft of wind in!

Without any wind, the paper had rotated hundred and eighty degrees by itself!

No, someone came in without me noticing! Klein felt a chill run up his spine to his head.

He was shocked that he didn't realize it while sleeping!

This meant that he was almost at the mercy of others, and his life and death depended solely on the other party's mood and thoughts!

Was it a member of the military's special department, or was it a powerful Beyonder sent by the ambassador? From the fact that the paper wasn't returned to its original orientation, it's more likely to be the latter, indicating a certain level of warning... To be able to sneak in like that without a trace, how incredible... Should I thank him for his kindness? No, there must be a reason why he didn't do something that could've been so conveniently accomplished... They don't want to alarm the members of the military's special department who are monitoring the area? Klein couldn't help but think of countless reasons.

The reason he wrote those words last night and spread the paper on the desk, was to let others see it. He wanted to let the ambassador know what he wanted to know and delay any possible acts of revenge until the matter was over so that he himself could have more time to prepare.

However, Klein had expected that the other party would sneak into the room while he was out, and when the surveillance of his house by the special military department would be reduced. Who knew that the person in question was able to bypass the Beyonders around him and quietly enter the bedroom while he was still sleeping.

The feeling of having his fate controlled by someone else was extremely uncomfortable!

A Beyonder who's very powerful or with extremely odd abilities... Klein turned his back and faced away from the oriel window and pulled out a copper penny.

"Someone sneaked into this room last night."

...

He silently chanted the statement, and with the help of his body's concealment, he flicked the coin.

The coin tumbled in the air and fell without exceeding Klein's shoulder height and landed in his open palm.

This time, the number faced up.

It was a negative result.

No one had sneaked into Klein's bedroom last night!

The paper wouldn't have turned around for no reason... Could it be sleepwalking? No, I can even stay awake after the Captain invaded my dream... Klein suddenly frowned and thought of two possibilities.

First, the divination was disrupted and resulted in misleading results.

Two, the one who sneaked in was not human!

Klein was in no hurry to confirm his general assumptions. He pretended that nothing had happened and turned the page so that it faced him.

The information he wrote about Ian Wright was completely true. He would still get a positive answer even if he used divination techniques to confirm. Therefore, he believed that the people under the ambassador's charge would follow this investigations trail and gain something in return. It was unlikely that they would have the motivation to seek revenge on him for the time being.

Similarly, he would continue to spread the paper out on his desk for the military's special department who were monitoring him. It would direct their attention away from him as they shifted their focus to Ian Wright. It would then be a race against time to find him before the ambassador.

This way, Klein would be even safer.

It feels like I'm walking on a tightrope. Is this a Clown's special trick? He shook his head in amusement. He opened the oriel window, hoping to take in the fresh morning air, but there was thick, choking smog outside that made him quietly close the windows.

Pressing down the paper with Ian's information with an ink bottle, Klein went to the closest bathroom and quickly washed up. He then picked up the black double-breasted frock coat and the half top hat that hung from the rack and walked all the way to the first floor.

He had an appointment with Lawyer Jurgen for breakfast today.

Pulling his black silver inlaid cane from the umbrella stand in the foyer, Klein walked along the edge of the street in a thick fog that provided visibility of no more than ten meters until he reached 58 Minsk Street. He rang the doorbell of the dark house.

As the clanging sound echoed, a black green-eyed cat with a raised tail suddenly appeared in his mind.

Brody the black cat walked straight to the door. After preparing itself for two seconds, it leaped up and grabbed the handle of the door.

Then, it inevitably fell and twisted the handle with its weight, and opened the door.

With a creak, the morning wind blew in, and the door slowly opened.

Brody the black cat glanced at Klein haughtily as it walked to the side.

“What a clever cat,” Klein praised as he faced the old lady, Doris, in her white apron.

Doris laughed as her wrinkles eased.

“It depends on its mood. Most of the time it acts stupid, as though it doesn’t know what you’re talking about. Oh, I’ve prepared my best bean turnip soup for you. Eat it with bread.” *Bean turnip soup... Sounds like something randomly mashed together...* Klein smiled.

“I’m looking forward to it.”

The lawyer came out of the bathroom. Even at home, regardless if he had just woken up, he was dressed to the nines. His white shirt was ironed and his brownish-yellow vest was tightly fitted, the lines of his trousers appearing to be freshly ironed.

“The contract you wanted is complete. Check to see if there are any omissions.” Jurgen’s blue eyes swept over. He didn’t make small talk as he went straight to the point.

His brown hair was neatly combed back, and the sheen from the pomade was unmistakable.

“Alright.” Klein leaned his cane, took off his hat and coat, and followed Jurgen into the study on the first floor, where he received a thick contract.

He stood there, casually flipping through it. The more he read, the more his head hurt. In the end, he only skimmed through the key clauses.

I hope that everything that’s needed is in there, as well as the previously omitted clauses, such as the establishment of the three instances that will determine how much money is to be supplied to Leppard based on

his progress, rather than a lump sum payment of 100 pounds. The first instance involves 50 pounds... Yes, that way I won't have to go to the Backlund Bank for the time being and take out the remaining hundred pounds from my anonymous account. What I have on me is enough...

Klein closed the document, smiled at Jurgen, and said, "I'm satisfied. Your professional skills are better than I imagined."

As he said that, he took out two one-pound notes that he had prepared.

Jurgen took the money, gave Klein the remaining contracts, and said in a serious tone, "If an error is made during the signing, there are two extra copies. Remember to shred the remaining contracts when everything is over."

The current iteration of shredding machines was a handcranked mechanical shredder.

Klein was about to nod his head, when Mrs. Doris suddenly shouted from the dining room, "Good lads, it's time for breakfast!"

"My grandmother's hearing has deteriorated," Jurgen explained as he invited Klein with a hand gesture.

Klein followed him into the dining room and saw that Mrs. Doris had scooped out a spoonful of yellow and green liquid from a black pot and poured it onto the corresponding plate.

"Here, try the bean turnip soup. Here's your bread." Mrs. Doris smiled and pointed to the suspicious pile of food.

Klein looked at Jurgen who looked even more serious than before. His heart skipped a beat.

Forcing himself to sit, Klein broke off a piece of white bread, dipped it in the yellow-green soup, and stuffed it into his mouth with the spirit of an adventurer.

"..." He was surprised to find that the flavor was actually quite good. The faint salty taste had a sweet tang to it that stimulated his appetite. It also perfectly brought out the soft, fragrant flavor of the bread.

"My grandmother was once an excellent cook," Jugen said casually as he slowly savored his breakfast.

...Then why do you have to keep a straight face... I really don't have any appetite watching you eat... Klein lampooned silently before immersing himself into the relaxed and happy feelings brought by the delicacy.

After leaving the Jurgens, he made three transfers to Sird Street in St. George Borough, where he made a formal agreement and paid Leppard the first fifty pound. The second sum of thirty pounds would be paid in two weeks' time, depending on Leppard's progress.

At this point, Klein was left with only 21 pounds 8 soli.

Then, he returned to Cherwood Borough and went to the public library to read the Tussock Times of the past year in search of news regarding the Intis ambassador to the Loen Kingdom.

When it was almost noon, he finally saw the black-and-white photo and confirmed that it was the one he had seen in his dream divination.

"Bakerland Jean Madan," Klein recited the Intis Republic's ambassador's name silently. He left the library and found a small restaurant for lunch.

...

At ten minutes to three, Klein pretended to take a nap. He drew the curtains, took four steps in the counterclockwise direction, and arrived above the gray fog.

He first divined if the military's special department had relaxed their surveillance on him and received a positive result. He then wrote a divination statement that he had thought of in the morning: "The infiltrator from last night."

Leaning back in his chair, he muttered the sentence. Klein's eyelids drooped as he fell asleep.

His bedroom came into view in a world of illusion, separation, and obscurity.

At that moment, Klein saw a black shadow squirming in the crack at the bottom of the door!

A slender, iron-black threadworm drilled its way into the room. It arched at the center and then flattened itself, constantly repeating it as it proceeded towards the desk.

Its movements were extremely stiff, as though it had broken down a series of slow motions, making it appear quite odd.

The black threadworm crept to the front of the desk and crawled to the top, leaving a trail of quickly evaporating mucus behind.

It stopped at the written piece regarding Ian Wright. Its head lifted up as the middle of its body rose, leaving only the tail to support the body.

At this moment, it was just like a human!

After examining it for a moment, the black-iron threadworm turned the paper around and disappeared back the way it came from.

So that was the case... That is to say, it wasn't that the infiltrator didn't want to take revenge on me last night; he simply didn't have the ability to do so... Unless this iron-black threadworm is highly venomous... Klein nodded in enlightenment, he then used divination and obtained confirmation that the Beyonder who manipulated the black-iron threadworm had done so under Ambassador Bakerland's orders.

After doing all of this, he completely covered the paper bag in the corner with gray fog and sent a message to The Sun, Derrick.

When the hands of the pocket watch were in place, Klein pulled in Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun at the same time.

This week's Tarot Club happened as scheduled!

...

The familiar gray fog and blurry human silhouettes appeared. Audrey, who had successfully advanced to Sequence 8, half stood up, lifted her skirt, and happily greeted them, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~ Good afternoon, Mr. Hanged Man! Good afternoon, Mr.

Sun!"

Klein, who had activated his Spirit Vision earlier, noticed the change in the surface layer of the Astral Projection in the depths of Miss

Justice's Ether Body with the help of the gray fog's uniqueness. With a chuckle, he said, "Welcome, our 'Miss

Telepathist.'"

Audrey smiled reservedly and said a few words of humility before turning to face the person across her.

"Mr. Hanged Man, you should be handing this week's six pages."

Perhaps, when Mr. Fool reads it, he will think of something and shares with us a little more of his "general knowledge"... The corners of her mouth curled up in anticipation.

Alger nodded and began to produce the six pages of Roselle's diary with Klein's help.

Previously, he had thought about consulting The Fool about whether he should directly submit the rest of the diary via a sacrifice. However, seeing that The Fool didn't seem too interested or take the initiative to mention it, he gave up on this idea.

And this was in line with his understanding of The Fool. Roselle's diary had a certain effect on the godlike-man—Mr. Fool—but it wasn't that great. He would collect it, but he definitely wasn't in a rush.

The six pages of the diary were completed very quickly. As Alger was about to offer it to The Fool who sat at the end of the long bronze table, he suddenly remembered something. He hurriedly said respectfully, "Mr. Fool, I have obtained a piece of

information related to the Secret Order."

There was no obstruction of information on the ocean; it just wasn't timely enough.

The pirates also valued intelligence and often sent people to the colonial island to exchange information that they had gathered. It was through these channels that Alger learned something about the Secret Order.

"Very good." Klein nodded his head slightly, giving his permission to The Hanged Man to recount what he knew. He didn't stop the presence of Miss Justice and The Sun from letting him speak.

This would help the former gather more information about the Secret Order, while the latter understood nothing.

At the same time, he allowed the six-page diary to appear in his hands.

The Hanged Man said unhurriedly, “The Secret Order has some connection with the Intis Republic.”

The Intis Republic. Yes, Emperor Roselle was from Intis, and Zaratul had sought him out in Trier, the capital of Intis... The Secret Order was also involved in the famous incident at Intis... Well, it’s not too surprising that the Secret Order still has some connection with the Intis Republic today... After validating this new piece of information with what he knew, Klein confirmed that the information provided by The Hanged Man was true.

Heh, just in time, I’m going to deal with the ambassador of the Intis Republic... Klein was in no hurry to read Roselle’s diary. He looked up at the three members.

Chapter 236: Internal Commission

As Klein's knowledge of mysticism and Beyonders deepened, as well as his experiments with some of the powers of the space above the gray fog, he no longer felt anxious when facing Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun. He became less preoccupied with maintaining an enigmatic and unfathomable image so as to prevent the Tarot Club members from keenly noticing his facade.

He now knew that although the deities in this world were powerful and bizarre, they were by no means omnipotent and omniscient. This description was something that only the legendary Creator of everything could do, one that only the City of Silver was still worshiping.

The deities had their limitations, and the deities could also be put into tough situations. That was something Klein could now confirm. Be it The Book of Storms or The Revelation of Evernight, they more or less touched upon this.

Therefore, at the recent Tarot Gathering, Klein was consciously building "character traits," slowly shaping himself into a restricted powerhouse who, for some reason, couldn't move freely but was almost a deity.

This way, even if he occasionally showed that he didn't understand certain things and occasionally asked for help, it wouldn't arouse the suspicion of the Tarot Club members.

Of course, the premise of all this was that, through his previous attempts and through the power displayed by his "Blessed," Azik, he had undoubtedly embedded the image of a deity-like existence into the minds of Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun.

Phew, I hope that this building of character traits will succeed. That way, I won't have to worry about not being able to answer their questions in the future... Of course, things that are part of "general knowledge" still have to be known, and I shouldn't show fear... Klein tapped the edge of the ancient table and said with a chuckle, "I want to issue a mission."

Mission? Audrey's ears pricked up slightly as her eyes widened. She was astonished, expectant, and perturbed at the same time.

She clearly remembered that this was the first time that Mr. Fool had officially issued a mission!

Although "He" had previously made a few requests, they all involved prepaid rewards. It seemed like "He" had randomly selected missions to conform to the principle of equal exchange... This time, He used the word "issue"... As a Telepathist, Audrey was already very good at reading the hidden meanings behind words.

At the same time, she keenly realized that although The Hanged Man appeared to remain unperturbed, he was actually abnormally tense. As for The Sun, he seemed to be muddleheaded, treating this as a very normal thing.

"You can choose to accept it or not." With the help of his Clown's powers, Klein's tone sounded much more relaxed. "Another Blessed of mine has arrived in Backlund. He wants to finish a matter, but it's not convenient for him to show himself."

Another Blessed... The Hanged Man nodded, seemingly in thought. He wasn't surprised at all.

In his eyes, for a powerful godlike existence like Mr. Fool, possessing many Blessed was a matter of fact.

I wonder what the Sequence number of Mr. Fool's Blessed is... Well, I still owe "His" previous Blessed a reward... Even though Mr. Fool's reward was paid by Mr. Hanged Man, and "He" doesn't really care about money, I did pray for help at that time. Furthermore, Vice Admiral Hurricane was killed by that Blessed..."His" Blessed would still need some funds for their activities... Audrey thought with some guilt.

Frankly speaking, thirty thousand gold pounds and a large plantation was an enormous amount of wealth to her, but that alone didn't have any significant effect on her life.

It's good having it, but it didn't matter if I didn't. Well, I might feel the pinch a little... Audrey nodded to herself earnestly.

As a teenage girl who wasn't considered an adult yet, ignoring the large plantation, she actually didn't have absolute control over the remaining thirty thousand pounds. She could only go with her father's arrangements, purchasing some stocks from Backlund Munitions Corporation and invest in a company that was attempting to spinoff some of the technology in ironclad warships for commercial ships.

The amount she ultimately received and could be used as an allowance was only 5000 pounds. However, her fixed annuity had increased by at least 2000 pounds from its original range of 15,000 to 25,000 pounds.

Seeing that Justice and the others hadn't spoken, Klein issued the mission.

"The task he wants to be completed is the assassination of the Intis Republic ambassador to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan."

"Assassinate the Intis Republic's ambassador!?" Audrey lost her composure as she asked in surprise.

This would cause conflict between the two countries and might even be an act of war! As a qualified aristocratic lady, her first thought was about international foreign affairs.

As for why Mr. Fool didn't do so himself, she found the answer obvious.

Which mighty figure would always be helping their subordinates?

After the Kingdom suffered defeat at the east coast of Balam, the King didn't personally set off. At most, the general would be replaced and new troops deployed.

Hmm, rumor has it that His Majesty wanted to set off for the frontline, but was stopped by the nobles and officials...

Alger was only mildly surprised by the task; his focus was on another matter.

Mr. Fool is indeed unable to strongly interfere with the real world... My guess is right... I wonder to what extent can "He" influence us after

establishing our connection... Can "He" easily take one's life away? Alger, a little pleased with himself, began to let his thoughts wander.

Derrick blanked out listening to the conversation.

What's the Intis Republic? What's an ambassador? These words sound so strange in Jotun!

Klein swept his gaze around and maintained his casual attitude.

"Which one of you is willing to accept this mission?

"What kind of reward do you want?"

Eh... I can't convince myself to kill an innocent man for no reason. And it could very well lead to a disaster, a disaster caused by war... Audrey, who wanted to raise her hand, hesitated.

Just then, The Hanged Man chuckled and said, "I've heard that this Ambassador Bakerland is also the intelligence chief of the Intis Republic in the Kingdom. He secretly supports bloodshed, planned a number of incidents that destroyed the relationship between the nobility and the rich, and spread rumors to incite the public into standing against the government."

He seemed to notice the hesitation in Justice, so he described the dark side of Bakerland in detail.

Then, he added, "I'm not sure if the ambassador is a Beyonder, but there are many clues that suggest he may very well be.

"He has quite a number of Beyonders around him, Beyonders that come under the Intis intelligence web. And this department is influenced by the original royal family in Intis, the Sauron family. They're in control of the early Sequences of the Hunter pathway.

"Moreover, the possibility of a war between the two countries depends only on whether or not the upper echelons of both sides want to fight. It has nothing to do with the life or death of a diplomat."

After the assassination of Emperor Roselle, Intis suffered several great shocks but ultimately managed to maintain a stable republican system. Because the Sauron family suffered a brutal blow during Roselle's reign, their strength fell tremendously in all aspects. All they could do

was accept the reality and change their goal to fighting for a seat in parliament and secretly influence the country's intelligence department and parts of the army.

After listening to the information provided by The Hanged Man, the hesitation in Audrey's heart disappeared. She gracefully nodded and said, "For the past few years, the Feysac Empire has expanded rapidly, having defeated the Kingdom and the Intis Republic on the Balam east coast and the Highlands. As long as we push the blame to them, the higher-ups and the citizens of the Intis Empire, it will be something acceptable and believable."

Audrey didn't know much about politics, but with her father being a Member of Parliament in the House of Lords, she still knew certain things.

Be it the shirking of responsibility or shifting the focus onto the Kingdom's internal problems, the unpopular northern barbarians were the popular and easiest targets for the nobles and ministers.

Whether they did it or not didn't matter.

Of course, more than a hundred years ago, this role was played by Intis and Roselle.

After pondering for a few seconds, Audrey looked at the seat of honor, feeling a little perturbed and a little guilty.

"Mr. Fool, I can attempt to complete this mission, but I cannot guarantee its success."

On the one hand, she was going to find her father and confirm that Ambassador Bakerland was really the head of the Intis intelligence service. On the other hand, she wasn't going to do it herself either. As a Spectator or a Telepathist, neither one of them was good at combat, and all she could do was gather as much information about Ambassador Backlund from high society as she could and delegate the mission.

Well, I could get Xio and Fors to ask Mr. A to do it... Or find the hosts of the other Beyonder circles... I cannot be exposed. Things have to be kept secret, and there might be Intis intelligence agents lurking in those

circles. I don't know how much money I'll have to pay, but 5000 pounds might not be enough... Audrey was already beginning to think of the subsequent plans.

Klein didn't pin his hopes on Sequence 8—Miss Justice—to succeed. He nodded and said, "What compensation would you like?"

"The formula to the Psychiatrist potion," Audrey said before hesitantly adding, "as well as the corresponding Beyonder ingredients. Oh, we can wait until the mission is completed before discussing further. If it doesn't succeed, I'll bear the expenses. I-I still ow-owe your Blessed the bounty money."

Bounty money? So it was given to Miss Justice... 10,000 pounds. That's 5000 if we split it equally... Shrouded in the gray fog, Klein pondered for a few seconds on how much Ambassador Bakerland was worth and finally decided that he was definitely more valuable than Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos.

"Sure," Klein replied in a normal tone.

At this moment, The Hanged Man Alger added, "I'll also accept this mission. The compensation can be determined after the mission is completed."

"Didn't you return to the sea?" Audrey asked in surprise.

"Just because I'm not in Backlund doesn't mean I can't kill Ambassador Bakerland," Alger said with a smile without giving any detailed explanations.

Derrick, who was beside him, never had the chance to join in on the conversation.

Klein nodded in agreement.

"Okay."

He immediately turned his gaze to the Roselle diary in his hands.

"29th October. The leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, visited me once again. He didn't mention anything specific and just casually chatted with me. I wasn't able to guess his true intentions. It seems like he just wanted to strengthen the communication between us and understand each other better?

"I've already met the two High-Sequence Beyonders from the Church, but I felt that Zaratul was much more powerful and mysterious than them, so I asked him what Sequence number he was without much hope, and in the end, he actually answered me!

"He told me that he was a Sequence 2, Miracle Invoker!

"Sequence 2? In the Church's categorization, that's the position of an angel, close to that of a deity!

"He truly is more powerful than the Alchemist and Arcane Scholar that I met before!

"But my intuition tells me that Zaratul isn't telling the whole truth. Sequence 2 might just be his former position, or that he's about to advance.

"Miracle Invoker? A master at creating miracles? The name of this potion makes one's imagination run wild!

"This is the corresponding Sequence 2 of Seer, a Miracle Invoker who controls fate?

"I tried probing Zaratul if the word miracle refers to the miracle of fate? That the Seer pathway is one that slowly understands and grasps fate so as to control it?

"Zaratul ignored the first question. He told me that fate is just one of the parts of the Seer pathway, and it's not even its main focus. The pathway that truly represents fate is Monster!

"He raised a few examples which were all potion names of the Monster Sequence. Sequence 7 Lucky, Sequence 5 Winner, Sequence 2 Soothsayer, and Sequence 1 Snake of Mercury! It's also known as the Snake of Fate.

“This was the first Sequence 1 I got to know. It hit me right in the face!

“According to what I know, the Monster pathway should be controlled by the Life School of Thought. This school seems to also have parts of the Apothecary Sequence pathway. They propose three major divisions, the world of absolute rationality, the world of the spirit, and the material world. Yea, it’s pretty cool.

“Zaratul told me that the Life School of Thought specializes in astromancy, seeking to use medicine, music, light, wine, and fragrance, to eliminate paths with unfavorable star readings and fate. They believe that disasters and diseases are caused by the loss of balance between man and nature, as well as the balance between man and his own mind.

“He added meaningfully that the Life School of Thought worships the moon.

“Why worship the moon and not go one step further, the Evernight Goddess?”

This diary took up two pages and was clearly copied from both sides of the original.

That’s a lot of information... Klein sighed in heartfelt silence.

This was also the first time he was learning of a Sequence 1 potion’s name.

Snake of Mercury and Snake of Fate really made one feel a pining for!

Similarly, it’s my first time learning of a Sequence 2. I now know the corresponding Sequence 2 of Seer... The name Miracle Invoker sounds pretty good. It contains deep meaning and doesn’t sound lowly. Of course, compared to Soothsayer, it does seem a little inferior...

Fate is only part of the Seer pathway and it’s not even its main focus. I have to remember this. I should constantly reflect on myself and not end up steering towards fate. It might result in the failure of my “acting”... Zaratul’s words don’t seem contradictory... The Monster pathway is the real path of fate... So, Soothsayer is a Sequence 2. If that’s the case, then I already knew of a Sequence 2 in the past...

Although he didn't take his eyes off the paper, Klein was seriously considering his own Sequence chain.

Due to his experience in digesting the two potions, "Seer" and "Clown," and because he could spy and revere fate, he was able to be a little prescient regarding fate. However, he would still be helpless toward the development of fate. He had slowly been equating the essence of his Beyonder pathway to fate. If it wasn't for this diary, it was very likely that he would've used this as a premise to comprehend and "act" for the subsequent Sequences.

As for whether or not Zaratul was lying, what Klein was certain of was that the Monster pathway was definitely the Sequence of Fate, which was consistent with what he had seen from the confidential information of the Nighthawks and with the potion name he had heard of earlier, "Soothsayer."

Now that there was a Fate Sequence, the "Seer" pathway was unlikely to be a repeat. This would result in some degree of overlapping, and it would be inconsistent with how each of the current Sequences had different characteristics.

Therefore, Klein was inclined to believe what Zaratul had said. He was inclined to believe that fate was only part of the Seer's pathway, not even its main focus.

The value of these two pages is invaluable to the present me... The Alchemist and the Arcane Scholar should be the higher Sequences of the Savant pathway. From Roselle's tone, they definitely don't belong to Sequence 2 and 1. That is to say, they are Sequence 4 and Sequence 3... For the time being, it's impossible to determine which is Sequence 4 and which is Sequence 3... Klein gathered his thoughts, flipped the diary, and continued reading.

As for why the Life School of Thought only worshiped the moon and didn't believe in the Evernight Goddess which symbolized the crimson moon, he was unable to ponder too deeply about it due to the lack of information.

The third page was Roselle's recount of inventing a practical steam engine. At times, he was afraid of suffering crackdowns, and at other

times, afraid that the fruits of his labor would be seized by powerful figures. His words displayed his fear of being persecuted.

To think that even Emperor Roselle, who thought of himself as the protagonist of an era, would have such a perturbed and worried side to him... The corners of Klein's mouth twitched as he flipped to the fourth page of the diary.

"18th April. Matilda is pregnant.

"It's to be expected, and I can even tell you exactly which lovemaking session she conceived in, because I felt a decrease in my Beyonder characteristic.

"Once the conception is successful, my own Beyonder characteristic will follow a mysterious connection, and part of it will be transferred to my child.

"After that, I asked Archbishop Fan Esti worriedly. He told me that this is a normal phenomenon. For Sequence 7 and below, Beyonder characteristics will not be passed on to the next generation, but it isn't absolute, Sequence 6 and 5 will naturally pass down a portion, but it will not affect the parent's strength. As for the child, they would be born with certain Beyonder powers, close to that of Sequence 9. But as a result, their pathway is basically fixed.

"At high Sequences, the inheritance of Beyonder characteristics is something one can control. One can choose to pass down or not, or one can even choose to pass down just a little bit, a third, half, or all of them.

"In other words, the children born from High-Sequence Beyonders might be born as Beyonders. As for the Sequence number, it's up to either one of the parents to decide.

"I wonder if the descendants of the deities are like this as well..." After reading the diary, there were only two phrases in Klein's mind: "Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility" and "Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation."

Is the law governing the survival of Beyonder creatures? It's no wonder that some magical animals will reproduce only before they die... It's no

wonder there would be the phenomenon of increased killing and bloodlust after childbirth. The target would be of their own race or even their partner. This is to supplement their Beyonder characteristics... According to this logic, if we trace this all the way back, where did the earliest Beyonder characteristics come from? Produced out of thin air? From the Creator who created everything?

Since Miss Justice had already advanced to Telepathist, Klein controlled the urge to nod and continued to leaf through the pages.

The fifth page was Roselle's criticisms about how no one could enjoy his pop music and thought that he was making noise, while at the same time, he mused how refreshing stories was a common pursuit of different people from different worlds, and that the popularity of the novels he plagiarized from The Count of Monte Cristo allowed the newspaper he founded to flourish.

...Emperor, is there anything else you haven't done? With a smile, Klein turned to the sixth and final page.

"10th November, I received the great pirate Savigny Solomon in secret at the White Maple Palace. I hope that he will plunder my opponents on the new sea route and strike at the ships of Feysac, Loen, and Feynapotter.

"And I promised to help him advance to a High-Sequence Beyonder.

"The Beyonder pathway of Black Emperor has names that are as strange as the Demoness pathway—Corruption, Confusion, The Fallen, Disorder... However, in order to match the Black Emperor, they added on their own suffixes, Baron of Corruption, Mentor of Disorder, Earl of The Fallen, and Prince of Abolition.

"In order for Savigny to live up to his name, I decided to confer him the title of Earl of the Court in secret.

"Savigny has a child named Nast Solomon, and my intuition tells me that he will dominate the Five Seas in the future."

Nast Solomon... The King of the Five Seas, Nast? Nast, who claims to be a descendant of the Solomon Empire? To think that he was born during the Roselle period! Klein was stunned.

Since Roselle had mentioned the term “new sea route,” Klein had easily determined the corresponding year.

It was in 1194 that the new sea route was discovered and the Southern Continent was found, and Roselle was assassinated in 1198. The diary could only have been written between those two years.

That also meant that it was about 151 to 155 years ago.

If Nast, the “King of the Five Seas,” was the Nast Solomon, Roselle had spoken of, he’s almost 160 years old... Is this due to other reasons, or do High-Sequence Beyonders obtain an extension to their lifespan in the first place... Klein thought seriously.

He gathered his thoughts and let the diary disappear from his hands. He then looked at Justice and said, “You are free to trade or communicate now.”

Mr. Fool has no general knowledge to tell us today... Audrey was slightly disappointed. She turned her gaze to Sun and said, “Can I exchange information related to the dragon from you?”

She clearly remembered that Mr. Sun called the Spectator pathway “the Dragon pathway,” and that he said it originated from the Dragon race.

“Sure. I want the Sequence 8 potion formula for Bard,” answered The Sun, Derrick, who had been silent all this while, in hesitation.

He had wanted to use this as an exchange for information on the world where Justice and The Hanged Man were living so that he wouldn’t always be confounded by what he heard. However, seeing that his process of digesting the potion was nearing completion, he still made his advancement his top priority.

Audrey wasn't surprised by The Sun's request. Since the "acting method" had proliferated in the City of Silver, then the amount of time that had passed suggested that it was likely that he was close to the end of his digestion period. Seeking the subsequent potion formula was definitely one of his highest priorities.

I wonder how the Bard acts? Sing poetry every day? When encountering combat, dodge to the side and use his singing to bring courage and strength to his companions? Or perhaps he would first bless himself before charging forward with a hammer or sword raised? I wonder if it will bring about an improvement in his singing ability. If it's possible, then he would definitely be an outstanding singer or opera singer... Audrey thought with great interest. She purposely didn't express her stance in a hurry, so as to not let The Sun raise the price again.

This wasn't something she learned from her tutor or from the Beyonder gatherings she had attended. It was purely a technique she had developed herself after she had advanced to become a Telepathist.

"I will try my best to find the Sequence 8 potion formula corresponding to the Bard pathway, but it won't be today. Are you satisfied with this condition?" Audrey said in deliberation before looking at the seat of honor at the ancient table. "We can seek Mr. Fool's help to bear witness to this agreement."

At that moment, Klein laughed and replied, "Miss Justice, perhaps I can provide the Light Suppliant formula for you."

Audrey's eyes lit up as she quickly nodded slightly.

"No problem! Then, what should I use to exchange with you?"

I haven't thought of it yet... Klein chuckled and said, "Don't worry; perhaps my Blessed will require help in certain matters in the future."

His thoughts were very simple. If he allowed Miss Justice to obtain the formula of Light Suppliant in her Beyonder circles, then wouldn't the knowledge he had stolen from the Eternal Blazing Sun at the cost of near immolation be for naught?

At the very least, it would be wasted at the Tarot Club!

"Alright, I will do my best to help them!" Audrey promised happily.

Klein pressed his hands together and a yellowish-brown piece of goatskin parchment appeared before him. On it was the formula for the Light Suppliant potion, including substitute ingredients and their ancient names. Furthermore, they were all translated to Jotun.

"Main ingredients: a piece of Brilliance Rock or powder of Dazzling Soul; Blood of a Mirror Hedgehog or the Heart of a Magma Titan; Supplementary ingredients: a Golden-edged

Sunflower, three drops of Aconite Juice..."

With a gentle push, the goatskin appeared in front of The Sun.

Although he could pray to Mr. Fool to recall the formula even if he forgot it completely, Derrick still diligently memorized the formula. It took him quite a while before he said, "Miss Justice, we can talk about the dragons."

"Mr. Fool, I seek your permission to speak with Mr. Sun alone." Audrey quickly raised her hand.

She originally believed that The Sun would put the appropriate content on paper for her to read, but it would be inconvenient for her to ask questions. She would have to pen her questions and push them back to him. Such a way of communication was utterly cumbersome.

Speak with him alone? In such a conversation, you probably wouldn't understand what The Sun is saying; likewise for The Sun... Klein nodded as his voice remained placid.

"Alright."

In the Beyonder circles, Hermes was a language one had to master. Ancient Hermes was something that one could learn and was relatively popular. Jotun, Dragonese, and Elvish were relatively less popular, so few people knew them.

The moment that was said, Klein isolated The Hanged Man, preventing him from seeing or hearing.

Alger had a certain interest in the knowledge of the dragons, but it wasn't enough for him to pay the price of listening, so he kept silent and waited.

Seeing that Mr. Fool had made a gesture for them to start talking, The Sun, Derrick, remained silent for a few seconds, organized his words, and said, "The dragons are mortal enemies of the Giant King. They all look like magnified lizards, and their entire bodies are covered in scales of different colors. Their four limbs are thick and powerful, and their wings are wide enough to drive their giant bodies to flight. They are the rulers of the sky. "They have a myriad of abilities, some have the ability to breathe fire, others the ability to command lightning, bring corrosion, or even creating frost. But these are not mainstream among the dragons. The mind dragons occupies the greatest number of dragons with Dragon King Ankewelt as their representative. The Beyonder pathway that stems from the mind dragon is the Spectator. In the City of Silver, we typically call it the Dragon pathway."

With regards to similar trades, Derrick had initially prepared to regurgitate the historical texts, but upon discovering that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man didn't seem to share the same "world," he gradually realized the value of the widely-known history of the City of Silver. Thus, he only talked about dragons this time and spoke nothing of giants, elves, mutants, phoenixes, vampires, etc.

The King of Dragons Ankewelt... This aligns with the records of the Church... Audrey nodded slightly, politely refraining from interrupting The Sun's narration.

Derrick recalled the contents of his textbook and said, "Back then, the most powerful and most terrifying dragon was the Dragon King Ankewelt, also known as the Dragon of

Imagination. Apart from it, his son, Alzuhod blanketed the sky as well, overlooking the famous, powerful figures across the land and sea. Its name was the Dragon of Nightmare.

"Regarding the Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt, there was a legend that whatever he imagined would manifest. The kingdom he imagined

would definitely descend upon the material world. The future it declares would definitely play out and become

reality."

This... Klein suddenly frowned. If it wasn't for the fact that Justice Audrey was focused on listening to The Sun, she definitely would've noticed his abnormality, even if he was covered by the thick gray fog.

The description made him think of Sealed Artifact 0-08!

A declared future would definitely play out... They share similar characteristics! Klein leaned back in his chair; he looked relaxed, but in fact, he was even more focused.

Dragon of Imagination, how cool... That's the mark of a deity! Audrey's eyes lit up when she heard him, filled with excitement and anticipation.

Derrick paused for a few seconds before continuing, "Its son, Dragon of Nightmare, Alzuhod, is similarly terrifying. It can control the hearts of every living creature and make them act according to his will. And these living creatures will find it hard to sense it, believing that their actions were of their own will. It will also fabricate real nightmares into reality, causing many living creatures to unknowingly participate in them. It would then give them the cruelest and shocking ends.

"Legend has it that it especially loves mischief, that it will let a prince kiss a princess to wake her up, but the princess has already mostly rotten away. It will make ordinary girls wear dancing shoes and dance in front of the prince, but find themselves unable to stop dancing until their deaths. It will create all kinds of coincidences and push the fates of many living creatures towards tragedy."

All kinds of coincidences... This sounds even more like a 0-08... Of course, I don't know much about the Sealed Artifact... Klein resisted the urge to stroke his chin as he made himself look like an immutable ancient well.

"What a vile dragon... However, its abilities are very interesting," Audrey said, half sighing, half excited.

Is this the future of the Spectator pathway? No, I have to call it the Dragon pathway! I don't want to switch to another Sequence! Audrey wished that she could immediately become a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist and continue her rapid advancement.

The Sun Derrick answered sincerely, "It has been two to three thousand years since the history of the dragon and the Giant King. Everything I know comes from textbooks and legends, so there is no guarantee of its authenticity."

"At least your history remains intact." Audrey was in a good mood. "And then?"

"Then? The Creator awoke, and the Dragon of Imagination, the Dragon of Nightmare, and other famous dragons fell from the sky, losing everything, including their lives. This resulted in a lack of sunlight for 49 days, causing countless volcanoes to erupt, as well as tides that drowned everything. And after the dragons declined, they could only hide away in various dangerous areas. Later on, the Giant King was destroyed by the Creator as well," Derrick said in a heavy tone.

This is different from the history I know... Wasn't it the Lord of Storms, Eternal Blazing Sun, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom who led humanity to defeat the dragons, giants, and kill their kings? Audrey felt confused, as though time and history were somehow out of place.

Klein was also puzzled by this and felt that the true history was riddled with mysteries, especially as it was from the Second Epoch, a time more ancient than history.

Most of the legends recorded in the Church's ancient texts should be fake, but the history of the City of Silver cannot be completely believed... What would real history be like? He gathered his thoughts, smiled and asked, "Is the exchange over?" "That's all I know," Derrick replied in shame.

He felt that the information he had provided didn't match the value of the Light Suppliant potion formula.

Audrey quietly drew a breath, as the corners of her mouth curved upwards.

“I’m very satisfied.”

I know my future direction... she added happily in her mind.

After a few more exchanges, Klein announced the end of this week’s Tarot Club.

After sending off Miss Justice and the others, he didn’t linger any longer and quickly returned to his bedroom to reduce the risk of being discovered by others.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey happily paced back and forth, planning to reward Susie with a few dog treats.

Just then, she heard a knock at the door.

From the sound of her footsteps and the gait, she could tell that it was her personal maid, Annie.

“Come in.” Audrey looked at the mirror, smoothed her hair, and straightened her back.

Annie came in with a piece of paper and smiled.

“Miss, a telegram for you came from the Southern Continent.”

Southern Continent? Alfred? Audrey suddenly thought of her elder brother, took the paper in delight, and examined it closely.

It was indeed from her second elder brother, Alfred Hall. He had sent a telegram from the east coast of the Balam Empire and it read:

“I’ve found the Rainbow Salamander you wanted. Two in total. Please await its delivery.”

But, I don’t need it anymore... Audrey froze, blinked, and turned her head sharply to Susie.

The large golden retriever wagged her tail with a stupefied expression.

Well, I don't need it anymore, but I can give it to Susie, and I can exchange it for other Beyonder ingredients. Well, Susie's potion is still short of the spinal fluid from a Farsman Rabbit... Some things are easier left to Susie, it's far more convenient for her than for me... Every "famous detective" needs a good assistant. Uh-huh! Audrey quickly made her decision. To her, this was no longer something she particularly cared about.

As she put down the telegram, her pleasure subsided, and the worries of reality began to emerge.

I still owe Mr. Fool intelligence regarding the Secret Order, the mission to assassinate the Intis ambassador, and a request from his Blessed... I've finally experienced the feeling of being riddled in debt... Audrey, we can't delay any longer! Let's start! The girl quietly clenched her fists. She wanted to find a pen and paper and write a letter to Viscount Glaint so that he could arrange for her to meet Xio and Fors as soon as possible. She needed to delegate the mission.

She picked up a fountain pen, dipped it in ink, and suddenly, Audrey held her wrist in midair without writing.

She had just thought of a crucial problem which was that she knew very little about the Intis ambassador Bakerland. In such cases, it was easy to misjudge the difficulty of a mission, either because no one was willing to accept it or because the mission had been entrusted to an unsuitable person, dooming the mission to fail at the very beginning.

The resulting growing cost wasn't her main concern; instead, she believed that The Fool would better reward her and help her even further.

After pondering for a moment, Audrey turned her head to her maidservant, Annie, and said, "Tell Countess Jaria that I accept her invitation and will punctually attend her ball tomorrow evening."

Jaria was the wife of Earl Wolfe, and she had invited ambassadors to Loen from every country to her upcoming ball, including Bakerland Jean Madan.

Audrey had planned on declining the invitation with the excuse of being sick, but now she was interested in the ball.

After she observed Ambassador Bakerland and gathered enough information, she would meet with Xio and Fors! Audrey suddenly felt the excitement of participating in a major event that she always dreamed of!

...

First Manor in the Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam.

Having returned to the real world, Alger Wilson changed into attire that was considered gaudy in the Intis Republic and went through the back door of the hotel into the alley and made several detours.

He stopped in front of a house with no garden or lawn and put on a familiar white mask.

Next, he knocked on the door with three heavy knocks and two light ones, separating them with two lengthy pauses and two short pauses respectively.

After about ten seconds, the door creaked open. A man wearing a pirate's headband stuck his head out and looked around quickly.

"Come in," the man said with a deep voice as he made way.

Without a word, Alger quietly walked into the room.

Creak!

The door slammed shut.

...

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein drew the curtains open and sat down at his desk.

The information about the Secret Order that was given to him by The Hanged Man made him realize that his target might have certain connections to the Intis Republic. At the same time, he was reminded of the words The Hanged Man had used to describe the Antigonus family—"strange" and "terrifying."

The Beyonder who sneaked into my room last night to read the information and leave me a warning was indeed strange... The Sequence pathway that the Antigonus family has in their control is the Seer pathway which the Secret Order possesses. The two can be equated... That is to say, one can speculate that the Beyonder from last night was a member of the Secret Order who works parttime as an Intis Republic spy? Or could the person not be a member of the Secret Order, but someone who used the connection between the Intis Republic and the Secret Order to obtain the corresponding formulas and potions? Klein began to boldly assume that as he carefully tried to verify.

This can explain why my Clown's premonition ability didn't trigger when the strange threadworm intruded. This is the suppression effect of a Beyonder from a higher Sequence that shares the same pathway as me... Of course, it's also possible that the iron-black threadworm posed no concrete threat to me...

Similarly, it can be explained why the threadworm infiltrated my room the same night that I wrote the information regarding Ian Wright. Furthermore, it went straight for the desk... The other party is equipped with Seer abilities, making matters appear reasonably logical...

After repeatedly verifying his speculation, Klein felt that his guess was very likely close to the truth.

If the person in question is a relatively higher Sequence Beyonder from the Seer pathway, what Sequence number would he be? And what would the potion name be? To have the threadworm in his control, could it be another component of a circus, the Beast Tamer? Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating manner while feeling amused.

Perhaps my subsequent potion formula will be obtained from him... Is this the true meaning of the revelation I received from my former divination? Backlund really is the Land of Hope... Klein muttered a few words to himself and began to consider what to do next.

He had entrusted the task of assassinating the Intis Ambassador Bakerland to put an end to all latent dangers. He had to avoid suspicion, but he didn't have the ability needed to do so.

After Ian Wright's whereabouts were revealed to both sides, he was confident that Ambassador Bakerland wouldn't have time to exact revenge on him in the near future and wouldn't add to his problems.

Finding the extremely important item he mentioned was obviously what he was most concerned about.

In other words, before that item is found, I will be safe. I won't need to rush to hire powerful, Beyonder bodyguards... Hmm, even if there's any follow-up revenge, it's unlikely the ambassador will hire a High-Sequence Beyonder to deal with me. It's neither economical nor necessary; after all, Backlund isn't his home ground...

The highest possibility is that he would still get the Beyonder who sent the iron-black threadworm to infiltrate my room last night.

He would at least be at Sequence 7, and perhaps even Sequence 6 or 5. He has the strength required and is familiar with the situation... When the time comes, I just need to hire a bodyguard according to this standard... I hope that before then, the Ambassador will never be able to issue such an order... Klein looked out of the window at the fog which had finally dissipated, seemingly in a daze.

He decided to continue heading to Bravehearts Bar tonight. Firstly, this was to come into contact with other Beyonders through Kaspars so as to choose a suitable bodyguard. Secondly, he could find an opportunity to sell Meursault's Beyonder characteristic, gather some funds, and see if anyone was selling any powerful mystic items to enhance his strength. This was a plan that would never go out of date.

After confirming his plan, Klein pretended to leisurely read the newspaper. He waited until the sky turned dark before slowly getting up and making himself tomato oxtail soup.

After eating and drinking to his heart's content, he drew the bedroom curtains as usual and decided not to open them tonight.

Then, summoning himself and responding to himself, he turned into the unique spirit body, bringing back Azik's copper whistle, Meursault's Beyonder characteristic, the self-made charms, all sorts of

materials, and the tarot cards to the real world, leaving behind only a few items, such as the bloodied contract.

After doing all of this and equipping the corresponding items, Klein's strength returned to its peak, and he was once again half an expert in mysticism.

He straightened his collar, took his hat and cane, and left 15 Minsk Street.

...

Iron Gate Street, inside Bravehearts Bar.

In exchange for a glass of beer, Klein found Kaspars in a card room, playing Fighting Evil while betting on a boxer outside. He was leading quite a pleasant life.

The familiar surroundings reminded Klein of the last time he had met Maric playing poker with more than ten zombies. He was suddenly glad that he hadn't brought Azik's copper whistle with him.

If I carried the copper whistle that Mr. Azik had given me, I think that a dozen or so of Maric's zombies would mutiny on the spot and come to "entertain" me warmly... I wonder what kind of expression he would have... Klein stood by the door, nodding at Kaspars Kalinin to indicate his intentions.

Kaspars covered his cards and swore. He got up, walked to the door, and said in a low voice, "I'll take you to a place where the people, although they aren't as good as Maric, are pretty strong. As for whether or not you can make a deal, it has nothing to do with me. However, I have to warn you in advance, you are not to anger them, or you might not be able to see the sun tomorrow. Of course, it's not easy to see the sun in Backlund after September."

"Do I need to pay you?" Klein asked sincerely.

Kaspars nodded, pleased.

"Two pounds."

I can buy a revolver with that money at a weapons store... Although they set the price at more than three pounds, it can basically be haggled

for around two pounds... Klein grumbled and gave Kaspars two one-pound notes.

Kaspars turned his head to his fellow players to inform them that he was leaving. Hobbling along, he led Klein towards the bar's kitchen, and from there, entered the back alley and circled around a darkened house.

He took out an iron mask that could only cover half a face, handed it to Klein, and chuckled.

"Just pretend that you bought this for two pounds."

I can buy a lot more with two pounds... Klein wore the iron mask and deliberately messed up his hair.

Seeing that he was ready, Kaspars knocked on the door rhythmically.

Seven or eight seconds later, a small wooden board on the door was suddenly pulled open, revealing a pair of brown eyes behind it.

After a long moment of scrutiny, Klein finally saw the door open behind him.

A man wearing an iron mask stood there and handed Klein a hooded robe. He said to Kaspars in a hoarse voice, "Next time, remember to tell me in advance. Otherwise, hmph!"

He closed the door, turned, and led Klein through the darkened living room into the activity room on the first floor.

There was a candle burning on the coffee table, and the room was dimly lit.

There were about ten people sitting on the sofas and chairs around the coffee table. They were all wearing hooded robes and wearing iron masks.

After putting on the long robe, Klein quietly found a chair in a corner and sat down. He heard a fat-faced man complain, "Recently, there has been a group of wild beasts in the sewers that have gnawed away a lot of the herbs I grew.

“They’re very smart and didn’t even touch the poisonous ones. I need someone to help me clean them up. You know, this isn’t my specialty. I’m only good at concocting medicine and treating your illnesses.”

Chapter 240: Trying Your Luck?

Good at concocting medicine, treating illnesses, and growing quite a few medicinal herbs in the sewers... Is he an Apothecary? I wonder if he's a member of the Life School of Thought or a believer of Earth Mother? Of course, it's more likely for him to be unaffiliated... Klein listened thoughtfully but didn't speak out carelessly.

In the Loen Kingdom, due to the Church of Storms rejecting the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, while the Church of Evernight and the Church of the God of Combat were irreconcilable; as a result of this, among the foreign religions, only the Church of Earth Mother had obtained the right to preach, but under the tacit suppression from the three Churches. They only had a few churches with very few believers, to the point that they didn't even need to form a team of Beyonders. And even if they did, they wouldn't be recognized by the government and couldn't cooperate with the police department. They would be considered as vigilantes.

According to the confidential information of the Nighthawks, the Church of Earth Mother had two sequence paths in its control: Planter and Apothecary. However, the latter was apparently incomplete.

The suspected Apothecary didn't have his hood on. He revealed a black iron mask on his face, but it only covered the part above the bridge of his nose, making the quivering fat on his cheeks appear to stand out.

"I repeat, I need someone to clean up the newly appeared beast in the sewers. I only need the area around Backlund Bridge cleaned up. Payment will be with four bottles of my precious medicine; two of them can effectively stop bleeding and stimulate the healing of wounds. Trust me, this is better than going to the clinic to do a suture operation, and it's effective for six months," the man suspected to be an Apothecary stated his requirements and corresponding conditions.

He suddenly let out a soft laugh and continued to describe the case, "The other two bottles can last one and a half months, and can allow a man to find the urges from back when he was seventeen or eighteen years old and become a Beyonder on the bed. Hehe, you know what I mean. Even if it exceeds the use-by date, it can still produce effects,

but it will also spread throughout the body. The user will become abnormally violent and their strength, speed, and agility will greatly increase before exhaustion kicks in half an hour later.

Why does he look like those old military doctors who plaster their tiny advertisements everywhere... And shamelessly promoting the effects of his expired drugs... Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

Seeing the silent room after he said his piece, the suspected Apothecary could only grit his teeth and say, "I'll add 30 pounds on top of my 4 precious bottles of medicine!"

Finally, a man sitting somewhere along the periphery of the couches spoke up.

He surveyed the area and said in a deep voice, "I accept this commission. You should pay an advance with two bottles of medicine, one of each kind. Mr. Eye of Wisdom will bear witness."

"No problem," said an elder seated on a single sofa with a nod.

The lines on his cheeks were deep, his skin a little shriveled, and his voice had an ancient quality to it, so Klein judged him to be an elderly gentleman.

"Alright." The suspected Apothecary heaved a sigh of relief.

After the conclusion of this transaction, the gathering seemed to turn more lively. Soon, a woman with her face completely covered by a hood said, "I want to sell two weapons."

Weapons? Klein adjusted his posture and became more focused.

Since he was temporarily unable to advance, he could only increase his strength by using external items.

"One of them is an inscribed steel sword. It was smithed by the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun. It comes with purifying and evil warding effects. It's the nemesis of Water Ghosts, Wraiths, Zombies, and other undead creatures. It can still be used for another three years. Of course, it's sharpness is enough to kill." The woman's voice fluctuated in volume, a clear attempt to hide her characteristics. "500 pounds or the Sequence 8 potion, Barbarian, and it will be yours."

How expensive... For me, there's no reason I must have it... If I were to encounter an undead that I'm currently unable to deal with, blowing the whistle is the best solution... Even without Mr. Azik, the messenger alone should be able to intimidate many undead creatures... Klein shook his head and listened to the lady's introduction of the second weapon.

"Meat Cleaver, with exquisite mechanical structure. It can be transformed, making it easy to carry. This is a combat weapon, made by an outstanding craftsman. It's rarely seen, and will cost 25 pounds."

There sure is a huge difference in pricing between weapons with Beyonder effects and those without... Klein watched from the sidelines until the steel sword was bought by a sullen gentleman in another corner, and the Meat Cleaver became part of Mr. Eye of Wisdom's collection.

There were successes and failures in the few deals that followed. The only thing that tempted Klein was a "Fortune Accessory," a Beyonder item that could make a person's luck with fortune rise for three months. However, this wasn't his main goal, and the price wasn't that great.

Seeing that the atmosphere had turned silent once again, he slowly exhaled and said in a suppressed voice, "I want to sell something."

After attracting everyone's attention, he took out an iron cigar case and pushed out the crimson Beyonder characteristic which resembled jelly.

Without needing to organizing his words, he introduced it with something he had already prepared ahead of time.

"This is something I obtained from a corpse. I'm not sure what use it has; it's just that I find it very magical. Maybe some of you know what this is?"

Klein deliberately didn't mention that this was a Beyonder characteristic, nor did he mention that the crimson "jelly" in his hand could replace the main ingredient of the Hunter potion.

This involved the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility, and he didn't want to benefit the members of this Beyonder gathering with this knowledge.

In addition to this, Klein had the intention of probing to see if anyone there knew the Law of Beyonder Characteristics

Indestructibility. Such a person would definitely be stronger than the rest, or perhaps someone with a powerful background, making them suitable as a bodyguard.

At the same time, he continued to disguise himself as an ordinary person who didn't know much about the Beyonder community. Although the members of the gathering couldn't see his appearance through the iron mask, Kaspars Kalinin knew what he looked like, and quite a few people in the room probably knew Kaspars.

Being "careful" and "prudent" were the two things Klein had emphasized to himself before leaving home today.

Gazes examined the crimson object in his hand, but Klein wasn't a Spectator and couldn't tell what they meant.

After more than ten seconds, no one spoke. The room was as quiet as a cemetery.

At this moment, the old gentleman sitting on the sofa, Mr. Eye of Wisdom, coughed and said, "I have a rough idea of what it is and what it does, but knowledge needs to be exchanged with something in return.

"I'll pay four hundred pounds; believe me, it's a perfectly fair price. Of course, you have the right to refuse."

The main ingredients of Sequence 9 potions are about 150 to 200 pounds. Two are needed, and they add up to about 400 pounds... The offer is very reasonable... This old gentleman with the code name Eye of Wisdom seems to recognize that this belongs to the

Hunter Sequence... He had no need for divination, and he was able to recognize it immediately.... Could it be the Sequence 7 of the Sequencers pathway, Appraiser?

Klein thought for a moment and said, "Deal. However, sir, you don't need to rush to pay. I still have another request." "What request?" Eye of Wisdom asked in an old voice.

Klein pondered and said, “The thing is, I offended someone. Uh, according to your circle, he should be Sequence 6 or maybe, 5. I wish to hire a bodyguard.”

“Sequence 6, maybe Sequence 5? Why don’t you just die quietly? If we reached that level, why would we be attending such a small gathering?” the suspected Apothecary blurted out with a bit of a sneer in his astonishment.

Although the other members of the party didn’t say anything, from the looks of it, no one planned on accepting the request. Their thoughts were similar to those of the suspected Apothecary.

Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, “Maybe you don’t know our circle well enough. People at Sequence 6 or Sequence 5 are very, very powerful and terrifying people. Yes, there have been many cases of a lot of Sequence 8 and Sequence 9 Beyonders killing someone that strong, but those are events that are still very hard to replicate. I think no one here is willing to take such a huge risk to protect you, uh... If you’re certain that the other party is only Sequence 6 and doesn’t have any mystical items, there might be someone who will want to accept the challenge this mission entails.”

“Well, I’m not sure...” Klein shrugged and said, “Then I’ll have to try to save myself. What can I get for 400 pounds? Uh, the mystical item you were talking about?”

“Believe me, a mystical item worth 400 pounds certainly won’t be able to deal with your enemy, and it will even bring you more danger. I suggest that you apologize to him. Sincerely apologize and perhaps 400 pounds will be enough to buy his understanding,” Eye of Wisdom said sincerely.

Frankly, I’ve thought about it, but I don’t think they’ll accept it... Klein was about to answer when the man who had accepted the task of cleaning the sewer beast suddenly laughed.

“Maybe, you can try your luck.

“I have a mystical item here that I can sell you for 400 pounds.

“It can let you hear the voice of a great being. If you’re lucky and can decipher some useful information, you’ll become very powerful, and it will no longer be difficult for you to protect yourself. Well, if you’re unlucky and end up deciphering a curse, or fail to decipher it, then you’ll be hurt, or even end up dying.

“Do you want to take the gamble?”

Before he could finish his sentence, Eye of Wisdom growled, “Black Snake, don’t mention that ominous item of yours!”

Black Snake laughed and said, “I’m not lying, I’m not violating the rules here either. I told him about the advantages and disadvantages and left him to make his own choice. Hmm, the probability of getting useful information is approximately 10%; do you want to take the gamble?”

The Russian roulette of the Beyonder world... Hearing the voice of a great being... Is this the Aurora Order’s Listener? An item left behind after a Listener lost control? Klein looked at Black Snake, that he suspected to be a member of the Aurora Order, and made many connections.

Perhaps I can bet on it? No, I can’t call it a bet, because I’ll bring this item to the world above the gray fog before using it... I can already bring real objects there... This way, I can avoid most of the danger... However, this is only an item left behind by a Sequence 8 Beyonder. The corresponding benefit might not be that good... Four hundred pounds isn’t cheap... As his thoughts raced through his mind, Klein nodded solemnly and said, “Deal.”

There was only a single candle that illuminated the room. The atmosphere in the living room was so silent that it was as if everything had frozen.

A few seconds later, the suspected Apothecary finally muttered, “Why don’t you leave an address? That way, I can get something out of your body.”

He looks like he’s cursing me, but he’s actually persuading me otherwise... Klein pretended not to understand and said to Black Snake, “I don’t have any chance of survival if I don’t gamble. There’ll be that sliver of hope if I gamble on it.

“I won’t sit back and wait for death.”

Hearing this, Eye of Wisdom, who was about to say something, shut his mouth because he couldn’t offer any other hope.

“I really admire your character!” Black Snake laughed.

“I also admire you. In the past, I had quite a few friends who had such characters. Now, I visit their tombstones every year and place a bunch of flowers there,” the suspected Apothecary mused in a mocking but actually persuasive manner.

He didn’t care that Black Snake was a better fighter than he was. He said whatever he wanted to.

Mr. Apothecary must have suffered because of his temper... Klein was secretly grateful.

He handed the iron cigar case containing the Hunter Beyonder characteristic to the attendant who brought it to Eye of Wisdom.

The old gentleman counted out 400 pounds in cash from the suitcase beside him and got the attendant to pass it on to Black Snake.

Black Snake casually took a glance and said, “I believe in Mr. Eye of Wisdom.”

He took out a small wooden box, bent down, and placed it on the ground. He pushed the box so that the object slid to Klein without going through the attendant.

The moment Klein's fingers touched the surface of the box, he heard faint illusory sounds and immediately felt a strong sense of dizziness.

For him, this wasn't something he couldn't handle. It wasn't even comparable to the illusory voices of Justice and company when they pray to him.

After sitting up straight again, Klein carefully opened the wooden box and saw a "ear" inside!

The ears looked real, except that the skin was dark and there were a few green areas where it had rotted.

"How do I use it?" Klein asked.

Black Snake casually replied, "Grasping it without gloves is the same as using it. Heh, you'd better go home and try it when you're alone."

Klein didn't ask any further questions. He closed the box and put it into his pocket. He deliberately smiled bitterly and said, "This makes me dizzy."

After a short moment of silence, the suspected Apothecary suddenly shouted, "I want to buy Spring of the Elves marrow crystals, who has it?"

As his voice echoed in the air, no one answered.

The Apothecary smacked his lips and mumbled, "Seriously, there's no answer every time this is asked."

"Maybe you could book a cruise to Sonia Island," Eye of Wisdom quipped.

The Spring of the Elves was also known as the Sonia Golden Springs, and one could tell from its name where it came from. The Spring of the Elves was a commonly seen liquid and was an object with rich spirituality. However, the marrow crystals were considered Beyonder ingredients and not easily purchasable.

After that, there were a few failed transactions at the gathering. Eye of Wisdom clapped his hands and said, “Let’s end it here today. According to the convention, we leave one by one, each separated by three minutes.”

Leaving one by one... Each separated by three minutes... This is to prevent the Gathering members from being tailed and robbed?

When Klein received the signal from Eye of Wisdom, he stood up and, guided by the attendant, left the activity room, and went to the door.

He took off his hooded robe and handed it back to the attendant before following the path in his memories back to the back door of the Bravehearts Bar. He then removed his iron mask and walked through the kitchen to see Kaspars standing outside the card room, over the barking of dogs and clamoring of people.

“I’m delighted that you could come back.” The red-nosed elder heaved a sigh of relief, the nasty wounds on his face seemingly trembling.

Klein leaned over and said in a low voice, “Are there such gatherings in the future?”

“It seems like you didn’t get what you wanted. Holy Lord of Storms, I don’t think you should continue wasting your time.” Kaspars scanned this customer he felt worried for. “Maybe it’ll take a few days. I don’t know the details. Let’s see if you can make it in time.”

Klein nodded and asked, “Is Maric here?”

“You’re still trying to convince him? No, it will only anger him!” Kaspars warned him in a deep voice. “He’s in the card room behind you.”

No, I’m not going to convince him. I’m trying to stay as far away from him as possible so that his zombies won’t go into mutiny...

Klein touched Azik’s copper whistle in his pocket.

“I understand.”

He left the Bravehearts Bar at once, went to the one-bedroom apartment in East Borough to relieve himself before returning to Minsk Street.

Inside the card room, Maric had gone all-in and confidently flipped open his cards.

He had three Kings and a pair of Nines, and the zombie opposite him had a pair of Sixes and an Eight.

Suddenly, the zombie took the initiative to reveal its hidden cards, a pair of Sixes!

This round, it won with four Sixes!

The pale Maric sat there blankly and immediately felt all the surrounding zombies coldly staring at him.

A few minutes later, he staggered out the card room on shaky feet and almost collapsed at the door while his usual entourage of subordinates inside the room fell to the ground.

“Don’t let anyone in before dawn,” Maric ordered in a hoarse voice as he looked at the stunned Kaspars.

He took out a white handkerchief and wiped the corner of his mouth. The handkerchief was quickly dyed with a dark blue tint with some redness.

After receiving Kaspars’s acknowledgment, Maric found a chair to sit and asked for a barrel of Southville beer. He stared blankly as he drank.

...

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein followed his usual routine of washing up and returning to his room before he drew the curtains.

After waiting for over ten minutes and confirming that there were no specks of spirituality around, he started to summon himself. He responded to himself and brought the wooden box containing the black ear into the mysterious space above the gray fog.

The illusory crimson stars didn’t twinkle at all as Klein sat at the seat of honor of the long ancient table and opened the wooden box.

This time, he didn’t hear any murmurs or feel dizzy. The boundless gray fog seemed to isolate all external sounds.

Klein let out a sigh of relief. He was now much more confident with his impending attempt and much more confident about his own safety.

With a thought, he blocked his own hearing and performed a few experiments to confirm the effects.

That's right... Klein nodded in satisfaction, reached out, and grabbed the black ear with signs of rot.

He felt its coldness and slipperiness, but he didn't hear the voice of the great being that was described by Black Snake.

Completely isolated? This won't do... It's impossible to use it alone... Klein muttered to himself, puzzled as he thought of the methods he could use to stimulate an effect.

After a dozen or so seconds, he conjured a pen and paper, intending to emulate the process he used to spy on the Eternal Blazing Sun previously.

That time, I looked directly at the Eternal Blazing Sun through the use of divine blood. This time, I'm only using the remains left behind by a Listener, so it definitely isn't that dangerous... Klein wrote down a divination statement without any hesitation:

"The origin of this item."

He took a breath, held the black ear, and leaned back as he recited the divination statement.

After reciting it seven times, his eyes darkened as he entered a deep slumber.

In this blurry, shattered, and gray world, Klein saw a man struggling on the ground. He rolled, screamed, and his eyes bulged out. His body swelled like a balloon, and countless hairs on his body turned black and long.

Soon after, an extremely evil and foul voice rang in Klein's ears, waking him up instantly.

It was different from the ravings and howling that came from the mysterious space above the gray fog. This sound was more penetrating, more purposeful, and more active!

Klein covered his ears and isolated any fallout, but the same voice echoed in his head.

He saw his vessels and veins bulge out as if they had become thick squirming venomous snakes.

Bang!

His blood vessels burst, and his veins broke off from his body, spreading out into slippery tentacles filled with sinister patterns. The gray fog slightly swayed, making the giant's palace look like it was about to corrode.

Unlike the incident with the Eternal Blazing Sun, Klein still retained his sanity and didn't roll over on the ground. He gripped the handrail tightly and endured the pain.

After a few seconds, the slightly swaying gray fog regained its calm, and the evil voice that echoed in Klein's mind completely died down.

One "tentacle" after another fell to the ground, and his wounds began to rapidly heal.

Interacting with deities is truly a dangerous matter, regardless of the method... Thankfully, I didn't face the True Creator directly this time. If not, I'll have remnants of madness and signs of losing control and would affect my body in the real world... Klein weakly leaned back into his chair and silently mocked himself.

This process was within his expectations, and it didn't go out of his control.

The only thing that surprised him was that the True Creator appeared to be slightly stronger than the Eternal Blazing Sun...

Just as Klein's thoughts were about to wander off, he saw the black ear in his palm suddenly crumbled, turning into tiny specks of black light.

It has become a pure Beyonder characteristic? Amidst his confusion, he saw through the corner of his eyes that the sinister-patterned tentacles were still twitching on the ground. They were the aspects of madness and loss of control that had been stripped from his body.

These tentacles gradually turned transparent and were about to disappear.

A flash of brilliance came to Klein's mind. He scattered the tiny black light specks in his palm at those slippery tentacles.

An illusionary black gas rose up and turned into a sky that constantly streaked with lightning. The background was extremely dense and gloomy.

All of this quickly disappeared from Klein's eyes. On the surface of the iron-black charm on the ground were many symbols, magic labels, sinister patterns, and twisted path numbers.

Klein bent down and picked it up, with the feeling that what was sealed inside were howling maniacs.

With the help of his divination techniques, he was able to barely decipher the use of this charm from its revelation. It was to let the opponent hear a terrifying roar, infecting them with madness. As for the final result, it depended on the target's ability to resist such attacks. If the target was strong, then they might benefit from it, but the price was becoming a devout believer of the True Creator, and if he was weak, he would collapse on the spot, dying amidst tragic cries.

I'll call it Language of Foulness... Klein muttered and set an incantation to activate it.

Chapter 242: Bakerland

Early Tuesday morning, Klein woke up naturally and prepared two slices of toast, a piece of butter, a serving of bacon, and a cup of coffee before leisurely reading a newspaper while having breakfast.

With the terrifying Language of Foulness charm, he was much more at ease. He was no longer as tense as he was before.

Klein finished flipping through the Backlund Bulletin, picked up the Tussock Times, and saw a news article on the second page.

"At two o'clock this morning, there was a fierce gunfight at Red Brick Alley in the East Borough. According to the police, it is suspected to be a clash between two gangs, one of which is the notorious Zmanger gang."

The Zmanger gang... Red Brick Alley in the East Borough... A thought occurred to Klein as he left the dining table and found the map of Backlund.

With just a glance, he noticed that Red Brick Alley wasn't far from Bacardi Street. Furthermore, Ian Wright had previously appeared at the telegraph office on Bacardi Street.

Was Red Brick Alley where Ian Wright was hiding? Was the violent conflict between the military's special department and the intelligence staff of the Intis Republic? I wonder what the result will be... Klein picked up the last of the bacon, put it in his mouth, and chewed it slowly.

He had "informed" both sides about the divination the previous morning and they had already locked onto Ian's location that very night, which implied quite a high level of efficiency.

After taking a sip of coffee, Klein put down the newspaper and fell into deep thought.

Suddenly, he heard the tinkling of the doorbell.

"Who is it?" Klein wiped his mouth with a napkin and headed for the door, puzzled.

Could it be a new commission? For the past few days, I've been out and about because of the Intis Ambassador. I wonder how many jobs and potential clients I've lost... It's such a waste of my advertising money... If this goes on, my finances will be stretched to the limit... Klein suddenly thought of something and opened the door.

Standing outside were two ladies, one of them being Mrs. Sammer, who wore a dressing gown. She had intricate makeup on her face, making her look more beautiful than at home and nothing like she was in her thirties. The other lady wore a widebrimmed hat with a black tartan veil, and a darker, more fluffy dress.

"Detective Moriarty, I have a friend who needs your help." Stelyn Sammer held onto her veiled hat, but there was no hint of a smile in her blue eyes.

"Please come in." Klein pointed to the living room, and while he was turning around, he took the opportunity to fasten the top button of his shirt and adjusted his black vest.

Stelyn nodded slightly and, without another word, led the blackveiled lady into the room.

She knew the place very well, and without Klein's guidance, easily found the sofa and took her seat.

Klein wanted to immediately start asking, but then thought about Stelyn Sammer's style of doing things, so he asked with a smile, "Coffee or tea?"

In his eyes, Mrs. Sammer was a lady who pursued a high quality of life and tried to showed her superiority all the time.

"There's no need." The other lady took off her hat.

She had good features, but the combination was disappointing. In addition, her cheekbones were too high, and she looked older than her actual age.

A little anger, a little sadness, a little hesitation, a little fear... Klein read the lady's emotions.

It wasn't that he suddenly possessed the abilities of a Spectator, but that the lady's actions were just too obvious.

"Yes, neither coffee nor tea can solve the problem." Stelyn imitated a position found in magazines, trying her best to appear classy. "This is Mrs. Mary Gale, a shareholder of Coim Company."

"What would you like to entrust me with, Mrs. Gale?" Klein sat down on a single-seater, leaning forward slightly and resting his arms on his thighs.

"Don't call me Mrs. Gale. Just call me Mary." Mary Gale pursed her lips. "I wish for you to tail my husband and confirm if he has a mistress. It's best if you can obtain material evidence."

As a result of the Church of Evernight's active push for years, the Loen Kingdom was more radical in its marriage laws than the other countries, such as Feysac, Intis, and Lenburg. It stipulated that those who committed adultery had to pay a financial price for it, which meant that the adulterer would be at an absolute disadvantage during the division of property.

I've heard that at least four out of ten of the other private detectives are investigating extramarital affairs... I didn't expect that I would receive such a job too... Klein said thoughtfully, "Material evidence is not easy to obtain."

"I'll lend you the latest portable camera," Mary replied without any hesitation. "As long as you have the evidence, I will pay you ten pounds. If you only confirm that he has a mistress, you will only receive three pounds."

You mean the so-called portable camera that's about two-thirds the size of my head? 10 pounds, this isn't a low price... Mr. Klein has been focusing on entrepreneurship and knew about the latest cameras.

He hesitated for two seconds before saying, "Alright."

"But you have to provide me with detailed information about your husband and his regular activities."

"...No problem!" Mary paused for a second before gathering all her strength to say it.

“Thank you for your help. I hope you won’t tell anyone else about this,” Stelyn reminded him.

Hearing this, Klein immediately sighed, “I’m a person who upholds confidentiality, and I often get into trouble for that.”

...

In the lobby of Earl Wolf’s house, men and women were dancing amid violin tunes.

Audrey was carrying a glass of pale gold champagne when she “accidentally” bumped into the Intis Republic ambassador to Loen, Bakerland Jean Madan.

“You’re the most beautiful young lady I’ve ever met.” Bakerland, with his thin face and slight stubble, pecked Audrey’s whitegauzed glove with a kiss according to propriety customs. His eyes looked passionate and bold.

Audrey rolled her eyes and said with a chuckle, “Is this the way people from Intis talk?”

“Yes, we are never stingy with praise for beautiful things.” Bakerland chuckled. “If it wasn’t for the style of the Loen Kingdom, I might have called you my angel.”

Old pervert... Audrey maintained her graceful smile and said, “The people of Loen and Intis are indeed different.”

“Heh, that makes me think of a joke. Please allow me to be presumptuous.” Bakerland squinted his eyes and said, “After a good time with a beautiful girl, most Loen men would say, ‘Oh, dear, I’d like a cigarette’, but most Intis men would say...”

He deliberately paused, and Audrey tilted her head, trying her best to keep her nausea in check while looking puzzled.

“What would they say?”

“Most of the Intis men would say, ‘Oh, baby, I have to return now and can’t be discovered by my wife.’” Bakerland raised his glass and laughed.

"...People who can laugh at themselves always have an additional charm to them." Audrey smiled politely.

Her beautiful, clear, dark green eyes suddenly turned to look behind Ambassador Bakerland.

"I'm sorry, a friend is looking for me."

"It's a pleasure talking to you." Bakerland bowed and moved aside.

Audrey moved forward gracefully and didn't look back again.

Just as she was considering who she should find as the object of her excuse, a young gentleman approached her and, lowering his voice, warned her, "Audrey, don't be fooled by that Ambassador Bakerland, he's a dirty old man! I don't know how many women he's tricked into bed.

Bakerland is lustful? This is in line with my observations... This is a weakness... Audrey smiled without hiding her disgust.

"Kance, do you have a misconception about me? Goddess, how could I be bewitched by that Ambassador Bakerland? His cologne makes me want to vomit; his words are so foul, and his taste is like a male peacock."

Kance was Viscount Leerhsen's youngest son, and their family was on fairly good terms with the Hall family.

According to Audrey, Kance had entered MI9 after graduating from Tingen University and had become quite enigmatic.

Her original plan had been to have a chat with Ambassador Backlund, and observe him up close before using the pretext of exasperation to get more information from Kance and his other friends from the intelligence community to learn more about him. To her surprise, she didn't need to seek out Kance Leerhsen since he came over and started the corresponding conversation on his own accord.

"Your feelings are correct." Kance gave a sincere smile. He surveyed his surroundings and whispered, "Besides, Bakerland is a very dangerous fellow."

"How dangerous?" Audrey asked curiously.

“Have you heard of Beyonders? I know that you’ve always been interested in such matters,” Kance said with some deliberation.

Audrey gently nodded.

“I know quite a bit, most of it being told to me by Glaint.”

Kance took a glance at Bakerland, who was chatting with an affluent lady, and said with a serious expression, “He’s Intis’s intelligence head in our Kingdom. He’s done numerous atrocities, but we haven’t been able to gather any evidence of his crimes. He’s a Sequence 6, a Conspirer.”

He didn’t go into details with an outsider like Audrey, nor did he mention that Conspirer was part of the Hunter pathway.

However, Audrey was already aware of this. She feigned naivety and sighed.

“He’s really amazing!”

“He has an assistant in the shadows, one that has perhaps reached Sequence 5. In addition to that, all of the Intis intelligence agents in the Kingdom are under his management. Many of them are Beyonders. Unfortunately, we only know a few of them...” Kance added in passing. “Don’t be too happy if Bakerland praises you either. It’s not what he truly thinks. He just wants to use this opportunity to gather more information.”

I don’t like what you’re saying... Audrey looked up at the ornate chandelier and thought for a few seconds.

“Is Bakerland very smart? You haven’t managed to get any incriminating evidence...”

“He truly is good at scheming, but he also has a lot of problems. He likes to chase after women and loves the feeling of romance. He takes risks and is quite radical. If it wasn’t for his identity as an ambassador preventing us from taking action easily, he would’ve been captured long ago.” Kance stroked his chin and said, “However, he’ll be replaced very soon. Very soon.” “Why?” Audrey asked in surprise.

“My dear beautiful lady, this isn’t something you should know.” Kance adhered to the principle of confidentiality.

When the ball was almost over, Audrey, who had gathered quite a bit of information, found Viscount Glaint and asked him to help her contact Xio and Fors.

Chapter 243: Catching the Adulterous Act

Wednesday morning, opposite the Coim Company, in the Cherwood Borough.

Klein was sitting on a wooden bench outside the Gardeley department store, clutching a paper bag containing the most famous Cyndi Desi pie in the area with one hand, and holding a cup of iced tea in the other.

Beside him, a tramp was curled up on the other side of the bench, sleeping. Ten minutes later, the mall's security guard woke him up and shooed him away.

Klein wore gold-rimmed spectacles which didn't provide for any vision correction and a silk half top hat. He didn't look much different from most of the gentlemen around him.

He idly looked across the street at the Coim Company, lifted his right hand, and took a large bite of the Cyndi Desi pie. He felt the rich aroma gush out and fill his oral cavity.

The reason why this pie from Desi Bay stood out amongst the southern pies was that it used a lot of oil and fat, but the meat was chopped into very tiny bits. With the fat and lean meat mixed together, it didn't feel too heavy.

The rich, meaty juice seeped into the outer crust, neutralizing the dryness and made up for its shortcomings. The wheat fragrance was clearly brought out, and the small pieces of crushed apples were used to stimulate appetite with a slightly sour and sweet taste while neutralizing the oily taste.

It's okay... Although the weather isn't good and the pollution is terrible, Backlund is far superior to Tingen in many other aspects. Foods of all styles can be found everywhere. There are all kinds of operas and plays available. They can be enjoyed as long as one isn't afraid to spend money... Although I might not necessarily eat or partake in such entertainment, I have these options at the very least. This is the advantage of a big city... Klein raised his sweet iced tea and took a sip.

He never took his eyes off the Coim Company's entrance. For that ten pounds, he had been sitting there since eight in the morning. Even his breakfast was bought on the way there.

Of course, for most private detectives, a commission of ten pounds was an absolutely enviable business, equivalent to about three weeks' salary for a member of the middle class!

According to the information provided by Mary Gale, her husband was currently the first manager of Coim Company and was Luke Sammer's superior; however, their shares in the Coim Company came from Mary's father, and Mary had inherited it.

One of the immediate reasons she suspected her husband of having a mistress was that an employee in the company had divulged to her that Doragu Gale would leave the office on Wednesday and Friday mornings alone and only return in the afternoon. In addition, he would leave work early for two days a week, and Mary had never seen her husband return home before seven.

After breakfast, Klein waited another hour plus before seeing his target walk out of Coim.

He was wearing a black top hat, a double-breasted tweed coat, and a standard bow tie. He was slightly fat, with yellowish temples, slightly brownish eyes, and a slightly long face.

Doragu Gale... He silently recited his target's name, stood up, picked up his cane and his heavy portable camera, and crossed the road.

Instead of getting his carriage driver to pick him up, he stood by the side of the road and looked around for a rental carriage.

Klein took the opportunity to cross the road and arrive beside him. Pretending to be careless, he bumped into his target.

"Sorry, I'm quite lost." Klein bowed his head in apology.

Doragu frowned, but remained silent, waving his hand to indicate that it didn't matter.

Klein bent down, bowed, and walked to the end of the street.

He didn't run into Doragu in order to steal his belongings and use the dowsing method to easily track him. That would've been easily noticeable.

Instead, Klein had only done one thing when he collided with Doragu. With the help of his agility as a Clown, he had secretly slipped a spare button of his into one of the pockets of Doragu's double-breasted coat.

Going around a corner, he stopped and looked back just in time to see Doragu board a rental carriage.

Klein was in no hurry to tail him. He waited patiently for a few minutes before slowly getting into another horse carriage and said to the carriage driver, "Just go according to my instructions.

Head to the end of the street first."

"Alright." The driver didn't ask why.

Inside the carriage, Klein leaned his cane and began performing a divination.

However, his divination statement wasn't directed at Doragu Gale; instead, it became "the whereabouts of the spare button of my clothes!"

The Dowsing Rod Seeking was originally the most practical technique to find objects. Only Seers were able to use it to seek people. Now, Klein was using it in its original form.

The easiest and most convenient items to find were those that belonged to himself!

Along the way, Klein kept getting the carriage driver to change directions until they finally arrived at a street house in the Hillston Borough. When they first circled it, Klein noticed that there were gardens and lawns behind the house, which was different from the other houses.

His dowsing method told him that Doragu Gale was inside that house.

After paying the two-soli fare, Klein walked to the door with marble statues outside. He saw two men in black and white plaid uniforms that resembled the police uniform.

“I don’t know you. Where’s your proof of membership?” One of them, a brown-skinned man of Southern Continent blood, stopped Klein.

“Proof of membership?” Klein hid his heavy camera behind him and asked with a slight frown.

The brown-skinned man immediately turned stern.

“This is the Quelaag Club. Only our members and up to one of their guests can enter.”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“Then how can I join your club?”

“You can only join after receiving a recommendation from two members,” The brown-skinned man didn’t brutally chase him away, but patiently answered the question.

He couldn’t guarantee that Klein would end up joining the club eventually.

“Alright.” Klein pursed his lips and decided to put Plan B into motion.

He found a hotel near the Quelaag Club and got a short-stay room for four hours.

Then, he locked the door behind him, drew the curtains, and entered the space above the gray fog. He conjured a yellowishbrown goatskin and a fountain pen in front of him.

Taking a deep breath, Klein wrote the exact same divination sentence as before: “The whereabouts of the spare button of my clothes.”

This time, he didn’t use the dowsing method, but a dream divination!

The reason why he didn’t do it in the real world was because Klein felt that the Quelaag Club seemed to be quite a high-end club, and he suspected that there might be some powerful Beyonders inside. In order to not waste time, he decided to get it done once and for all.

In the gray dreamy world, Klein was the first to see Doragu’s black coat, which was hung on a coat rack. On the carpet in front of it was a round table.

The scene zoomed out, and the sight of a romping man and woman entered Klein's eye. The man was Doragu Gale, the woman had shimmering blond hair who looked rather young. She was in her early twenties at most.

The pained expression with her knitted brows does look rather coquettish... Why am I always seeing scenes such as this... Klein covered his eyes and woke up.

The fact that Doragu has a mistress is confirmed... How do I get material evidence... By responding to my prayers? But this is limited to what I can obtain with my own body. I can only do it through sketching and not through the camera... I can't possibly draw a picture with my bare hands, can I? It looks like today won't do. I'll tail that girl and find out her address and name later. I refuse to believe that they'll be inside the Quelaag Club every time they meet... Detective Klein quickly came up with his next course of action.

Just as he was about to leave the mysterious space above the gray fog, he suddenly thought of something.

He decided to take the opportunity to divine if the iron-black threadworm which had infiltrated his room was under the control of a Beyonder of the Seer pathway.

He didn't do so before because he felt that the relevant information was too scarce, and it was difficult to create something out of nothing which would result in a failed divination. It would've been the same if he was above the gray fog. Furthermore, he had various matters to divine the few times he came above the gray fog previously, and he didn't have the capacity to bother with such a question. Now that he was free, he decided that it wouldn't hurt to do the divination.

As for the question of whether it was risky to contact Azik, he had already long divined it. The answer was that it was risky, and not something trivial, so he could only use it as his last resort.

After writing the corresponding divination statement, Klein removed the silver chain from his sleeve and allowed the topaz pendant to hang over the paper.

"The iron-black threadworm that sneaked into my room was controlled by a Beyonder from the Seer pathway."

...

After repeating it seven times, Klein opened his eyes and saw that the spirit pendulum was spinning clockwise, with great amplitude and frequency.

Positive... The answer is positive!

Shouldn't it have failed? Klein didn't expect to obtain such an answer. According to his Seer instincts, such a divination was likely to fail.

Why? He frowned and thought for a while before deciding to switch to a different method of divination and target.

He wanted to directly divine the controller using dream divination!

This time, Klein saw nothing in his dream, and couldn't get the corresponding revelation about the Seer pathway Beyonder.

"That's more like it..." he muttered and thought back to the prior divination and fell into deep thought.

They should've been a lack of conditions and result in a failed divination just like the one that followed... Could it be that this mysterious space had filled in the necessary conditions? Does it contain something of the Seer pathway? Klein suddenly had a flash of inspiration. He had a bold idea!

Perhaps, the mysterious space above the gray fog had something to do with the path of the Seer pathway!

Hmm... Klein lightly rapped the edge of the ancient table. Despite thinking about it, he couldn't find any other evidence. He could only temporarily put this matter on hold and prepare for his return to the real world.

Regardless, I've confirmed at least one thing. The Mid-Sequence Beyonder beside the Ambassador is from the Seer pathway and whether he's a member of the Secret Order doesn't matter... This might be my chance of obtaining the Sequence 7 and even the Sequence 6

potion formula! Klein extended his spirituality and wrapped it around him before plunging into the gray fog.

...

Meanwhile, in Viscount Glaint's study.

Audrey let the master of the study guard the door while she looked at Xio and Fors. After a few seconds of silence, she said, "I need your help with a mission."

"What mission?" Xio's eyes lit up as if she could smell the ink on the bills.

Audrey gave her a polite smile.

"Assassinate the Intis ambassador to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan."

"What?" Fors touched her earlobes, wondering if she had heard wrongly.

The beautiful, naive, curious, and scatter-brained Miss Audrey actually assigned an assassination mission!?

Furthermore, the target is the ambassador of Intis, a powerful country in the Northern Continent!

Xio was slow on the uptake as she hesitantly said, "Our strength i-isn't enough to complete this mission."

The first thing she considered was the difficulty of the mission!

Audrey ignored her question and allowed her to imagine the reason. She said, with faint dimples showing, "I'm not asking you to take the job. I just wish for you to find a Beyonder with the strength to complete it. For example, Mr. A, I'll pay you 4000 gold pounds for this. Of course, this is only my initial offer. The details are negotiable.

"If it eventually succeeds, I'll pay you 500 pounds. Even if the mission ends up failing, you will receive 200 pounds due to the risk you have taken."

Her uninvested annuity and the rest of the bounty was around 13,000 pounds. However, any large utilization of it would certainly attract the attention of Earl Hall, and even the Varvat Bank would investigate. She had calculated that 5000 pounds was the tipping point, and it was best not to exceed it.

4000 gold pounds... Xio heard her own heavy breathing, but she quickly became depressed, knowing full well that she wouldn't be able to complete the mission herself.

Just 500 pounds to seek out other Beyonders in our names while maintaining it a secret... Miss Audrey is the most generous and beautiful lady I've ever seen! Xio quickly returned to reality.

While feeling enticed, Fors's mind was filled with questions.

Why would Miss Audrey delegate such a mission?

Is there some internal strife among nobles?

Is this the precursor to inciting a war?

Is Earl Hall representing some important figure in a bid to make the situation turn chaotic?

...

The duo quickly contacted Mr. A using a previously agreed-upon channel. At three o'clock in the afternoon, when the rare sunlight shined through the fog and lit up the whole of Backlund, they arrived at the house where they had previously participated in gatherings. There, they saw Mr. A sitting with his legs up and his hood over his head, but he gave off a condescending air.

"You said that you have something important to talk to me about?" Mr. A's eyes move back and forth between the two ladies.

I heard that some female Beyonders would use their bodies to trade for potion ingredients with Mr. A... He's really a disgusting pervert... Fors curled her lips and said, "There's a large transaction; I wonder if you're interested in it?" Mr. A scanned Xio's face and chuckled.

"Tell me. Let's see what this large transaction is."

Holding back the urge to draw her triangular blade, Xio answered with the tone of an Arbiter, "Assassinate the Intis ambassador to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan."

Mr. A fell silent, but since his expression was obscured by the shadow of his hood, Xio and Fors couldn't guess what he was thinking.

After a while, he slowly leaned back and said with a deep voice, "So, what's the reward?"

"4000 pounds. In addition, we will provide the relevant information such as Ambassador Bakerland is a Sequence 6 Conspirer of the Hunter pathway, or that his weakness is lust." Xio tried her best to make Mr. A believe that there was hope in completing the mission.

Mr. A chuckled and said, "I can accept this mission, but the reward must be raised."

"The first choice—the potion formulas to Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, or Manipulator. Of course, their price is higher than this mission. There's no need for the complete formula. A partial formula will suffice.

"The second choice—10,000 gold pounds. Heh, this is the bounty of Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos. Bakerland's strength definitely isn't as strong as he is, but he has powerful aides. Besides, believe me, he definitely has mystical objects on him."

A reasonable price, but that's also an exaggerated price... Xio and Fors looked at each other and said, "We shall return and discuss it. At this time tomorrow, we'll give you our answer." "Sure." Mr. A made a gesture of farewell.

After being led out by an attendant, Fors murmured in puzzlement, "Those are High-Sequence Beyonder formulas?"

"Frankly speaking, I find it strange. I thought Mr. A would only want formulas or potion ingredients. Money shouldn't be a necessity for him."

Xio turned to look at her friend.

"Fors, you really are a naive clinical doctor and author. You must know that Mr. A has many subordinates. They need a house to sleep in, stomachs to fill, clothes to buy, and the need to vent their desires. All of this has to be bought using money. Besides, to some nobles who have declined, what wouldn't they sell if there are gold pounds to be made?

"Without his men, Mr. A would be just as scary, but he will be rather lacking in intelligence.

"That's what all the small gangs in the East Borough know."

Fors frowned and said, "Xio, you're not that stupid after all..."

In the evening, the two of them met the familiar large golden retriever at a predetermined location and passed Mr. A's reply to Audrey.

When Audrey finished reading the note, not only did she not feel stumped, she even let out a long sigh of relief.

It was simply wonderful for her that she could finish the ambassador with just 10,000 gold pounds!

For the time being, I can only use 5000 pounds. I'll still have to pay Xio and Fors 500 pounds... Well, first of all, I'll borrow 6000 pounds, no—8000 pounds from Glaint. I can't expose any problems with my daily expenses. Then, I'll pay him back over four to five months, with interest of 1000 pounds... Before the new year, I will be quite poor, having only 1000 pounds to use a month... Audrey quickly made her decision. Then she burned the original slip of paper and wrote on a new piece of paper.

"The second option. An advance of 2000 pounds and the remaining 8000 pounds will be paid after the mission is completed."

...

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein saw Mary Gale again at tea time.

He had initiated the meeting through Mrs. Stelyn Sammer.

"Madam Mary, I found out that your husband went to the Quelaag Club while tailing him. However, I wasn't able to enter because I'm not a member of the club. Even so, according to my observations, about half an hour after your husband left, only one young lady came out. Her name is Erica Taylor, who lives at 126 New Year's Street, Hillston Borough. She used to work at Coim for a period of time and is currently unemployed. I took a picture of her leaving the Quelaag Club."

"She's unemployed; yet, she can live in Hillston Borough..." Stelyn sneered.

Mary wore a gloomy expression as she remained silent for a few seconds.

"You have to obtain material evidence of them being intimate. Oh... The Quelaag Club, right? I'll get two members to nominate you as a member, but you must fill in your particulars as 'famous detective.' I can't get people to bring you in because it might not mesh well with the schedules of others."

"Alright." Klein hesitated, but still asked, "Who will pay the club fees?"

"I will be responsible for the initial fees. This is in return for your efficiency. If you wish to remain in the club, you will have to pay the annual fee of about 15 pounds yourself." There seemed to be a fire burning in Mary's eyes.

The fee is fifteen pounds a year, and the initiation fee is at least fifty pounds... A high-end club... Madam Mary, you sure are generous! Klein immediately nodded.

"I will provide you with the evidence as soon as possible."

...

After dinner, Klein went out again and continued to the Bravehearts Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

There were two reasons for this. First, he wanted to show his helplessness in front of the military's special department and the police who were observing him in secret. He wanted to appear as though he was trying every method to save himself. Second, he also wanted to deceive the Mid-Sequence Beyonder from the Seer pathway under the Ambassador's command.

In matters involving the gray fog, Klein believed that the gentleman or lady would never be able to succeed in a divination, including his own resurrection and past events, as well as how he had successfully created the Language of Foulness charm through the help of the True Creator.

This is definitely a powerful item that can affect my opponent. Klein had to maintain his act of feeling unsafe and his act of madly grasping at all kinds of straw to mislead his opponent in order to increase his chances of victory.

Under the dark night, Klein entered the bar.

Before he could get a beer, he saw Kaspars, the old man with the brandy nose, standing in front of the rat-baiting ring with his arms crossed.

“Perfect timing. Maric is looking for you.” Kaspars spotted Klein and limped over.

“Maric is looking for me?” Klein asked in shock.

Instinctively, he touched the Azik’s copper whistle in his pocket and considered what excuse he could use to politely decline the meeting.

Or could it be that wrapping the copper whistle with one’s spirituality wouldn’t cause any zombie-like phenomenon? It wasn’t like Mr. Azik hadn’t been to the cemetery before, nor had any corpses attacked him... Klein tensed up.

Before he could come up with an excuse, he saw Maric, his face pale and his eyes filled with malice, walking over. He wasn’t surrounded by any zombies.

Where are his zombies? Klein thought with a mixture of puzzlement and relief.

Maric pointed to the card room and walked over there first. Klein looked into the distance and followed him since there were no zombies.

“What’s the matter?” Klein took the initiative to ask.

Maric, in a black vest and white shirt, sat on the card table and stared into Klein’s eyes.

“Does that job of yours still stand?”

“Huh?” Klein wasn’t able to react in time.

“I have a friend who is short on money and is willing to accept this commission. She’s stronger than me and should be able to protect you. However, she can only protect you for three days.

The price is 1000 pounds,” Maric said in a low, slurred voice.

Why is a Beyonder willing to accept the commission only after I acquired the Language of Foulness... However, this is good as well. This will be able to confuse the ambassador’s Beyonder. After he painstakingly defeats Maric’s friend, my chances of success will become extremely high... The only problem is determining if Maric’s

friend is trustworthy... Hmm, I'll go above the gray fog to divine it... Klein pondered for a moment and said, "Give me time to consider it and save up the necessary funds. It's not a small sum.

"Also, it's best if the person protecting me is hidden. It must be confidential. As for the three days of protection, that is up to me. It's definitely within these two weeks."

Of course, the Seer would definitely be aware of it... Klein silently added.

As for money, he had already considered it from the beginning. If selling Meursault's Beyonder characteristic wasn't enough, he would ask Miss Justice for money. After all, he had made the preparations. Roselle's diary still had a lot of knowledge that could be sold. Of course, if the price was simply unacceptable, he could forgo it.

Now, although Meursault's Beyonder characteristic had become the Language of Foulness charm, I still have Miss Justice! She still owes me the money needed for Sequence 8 Light Suppliant as well as the intelligence regarding the Secret Order. Combining those together, 1000 pounds would be enough!

Chapter 245: Confirmation

Back home at 15 Minsk Street, Klein was in no hurry to head above the gray fog to perform a divination. Instead, he acted as though nothing had happened.

In the process, he heard an illusory prayer and vaguely recognized it as a woman's voice.

After experiencing the ravaging murmurs of the True Creator, my ability in this aspect has apparently improved a little... Klein turned the newspaper while engrossed in thought and settled himself on the reclining chair in a motionless half-slumped state.

He waited until the clock nearly struck ten, before putting down what he was doing and went to the bathroom on the second floor to clean himself up.

Entering the bedroom and pulling the curtains shut, Klein went above the gray fog. He saw that the crimson star symbolizing Justice was constantly expanding and contracting, and it was also echoing with prayers.

Klein spread out his spirituality and made contact. Dressed in a white silk nightgown, Miss Justice appeared in front of him.

Her figure was still blurry, as if she was in bed.

After reciting his honorific name, Audrey cut to the chase.
"Ambassador Bakerland is a Sequence 6 Conspirer of the Hunter pathway. He's suspected to have a Sequence 5 assistant...

"After I obtained detailed information, I got someone to inquire Mr. A. He has agreed to accept the assassination mission, but the conditions are 10,000 gold pounds or any of the potion formulas of Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, and Manipulator. They do not need to be complete. A portion of the formula would suffice.

"I chose the former and paid an advance of 2000 pounds. Honorable Mr. Fool, was my decision correct?"

10,000 gold pounds... The corner of Klein's lips twitched as he forced himself to focus on the matter.

The Sequence 5 assistant should be that Seer pathway infiltrator?

The first thing that should be done is to overestimate the enemy...

Would Mr. A have the ability to do it? Would he neglect the job after taking the money...

Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, Manipulator, and Unshadowed are likely Sequence 4's. That is the threshold of a High-Sequence Beyonder...

It is very likely that Mr. A is one of the 22 Oracles of the Aurora Order. To be stationed in the Capital of Capitals, Backlund, means that he's second only to the five Saints of the Aurora Order's upper echelons. He must be the cream of the crop among the Oracles...

The Aurora Order wields the Secrets Suppliant pathway which is the direct route to the True Creator. As an Oracle, he has a high probability of being a Beyonder of this Sequence chain. Based on Backlund's position, it can be inferred that he's at Sequencers 5, Shepherd. Of course, he could also be a Rose Bishop that's one Sequence lower, but that would mean that he's more outstanding in other aspects, such as his intelligence...

I have to remind Miss Justice that she shouldn't have too many interactions with Mr. A. The Beyonders of the Secrets Suppliant Sequence are either already lunatics exhibiting abnormalities or lunatics who have hidden their insanity well, almost without exception... Sequence 8 Listeners in this Sequence pathway often hear the voice of the True Creator...

Yes, only a lunatic would be bold enough to accept the mission of assassinating an Intis ambassador and have the courage to complete it...

I have here a portion of the Unshadowed potion formula, as well as the corresponding ritual needed for the advancement. This can save Miss Justice 10,000 gold pounds...

Why would Mr. A only need the formulas of Unshadowed, Cataclysmic Interrer, Prophet, and Manipulator? Are these paths that can be

swapped at High Sequences of the Secrets Suppliant pathway? That's a bit too much. That makes it five in total...

Unshadowed is from the Eternal Blazing Sun. Cataclysmic Interrer sounds like it's from the Lord of Storms or maybe the Evernight Goddess... I previously determined that the Eternal Blazing Sun, Lord of Storms, and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom have pathways that are relatively similar; therefore, They view each other with animosity. From the looks of it, Cataclysmic Interrer belongs to the Lord of Storms and is Sequence 4 of the Sailor Sequence. Prophet is likely from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom...

Then which pathway does Manipulator belong to?

It'll be interesting if they can all be exchanged with the Sequence corresponding to the True Creator...

Yes... I cannot give the Unshadowed formula to Mr. A. Not even a portion. The Aurora Order members are all lunatics who are always looking for opportunities to take revenge on the world to the detriment of public safety. Items of strategic importance must not be traded with them... This isn't just a question of the bottom line, it also involves my own safety. Once the time is ripe, those lunatics from the Aurora Order might very well sacrifice the entire city...

Let Miss Justice spend the 10,000 pounds then. Part of it includes the payment she would like to give to my Blessed. The rest can be made up to her with the knowledge I already know... Klein reached out and pinched his cheek.

He didn't reply to Justice immediately. Instead, he conjured a pen and paper, ready to make a divination.

Klein had no idea who Maric's friend was. He could only tell from the pronoun "she" that the person was a woman. Failure was inevitable if he wanted to directly divine the reliability of the person in question.

However, Klein could make an indirect divination regarding his own safety, which would have a much higher success rate.

As for whether he would suffer an interference or how accurate the outcome would be, he wasn't worried at all thanks to the gray fog's shielding.

After more than ten seconds of deliberation, Klein wrote: "It's risky for me to hire Maric's friend to be my bodyguard for three days."

Putting the pen away, he removed his spirit pendulum, focused his mind, and quickly performed the divination.

When he opened his eyes, he saw that the topaz pendant was rotating clockwise. However, the amplitude was very small and its speed was very slow.

There's a certain risk, but it's quite low... Reliable... Klein nodded slightly and changed to divine about Mr. A.

Similarly, he had no direct contact with Mr. A, and all he knew was based on descriptions and inference. It was difficult to find out whether or not he was capable enough, or willing to keep his promise. All he could do was make an indirect divination.

As an excellent "Seer," Klein quickly determined the direction, and that was to divine Ambassador Bakerland!

This ambassador had relatively more connections with him, and the information he had about him was even more detailed. Klein knew very well what the other party was involved in, and as a divination target, there were no problems.

After some thought, Klein wrote: "Bakerland Jean Madan will have his life threatened by Mr. A."

To prevent it from failing, he tried his best to make the words vague in this low-confidence divination and didn't require a definite answer.

This time, Klein saw that the spirit pendulum was still rotating clockwise, but it had become faster and the amplitude had increased.

It means that Mr. A will attempt to complete the mission, and that there's a good chance of success... Klein slowly exhaled and began to respond to Miss Justice's prayer.

"Sure.

“There’s no problems with your decision.

“You absolutely must not show yourself when entrusting this mission.

“My Blessed wishes for 1000 pounds for his activities. It will be done in the same way as before, and it would be best if it can be completed by tomorrow.

“This will be payment for the Light Suppliant formula. You do not need to seek out news regarding the Secret Order any further. However, if you obtain any relevant information, I will do a trade with you.”

After learning that the infiltrator was a Beyonder in the Seer pathway, Klein’s need for information about the Secret Order became less urgent.

He had originally wanted to ask for more than 1000 pounds, but in consideration of how Miss Justice had to pay 10,000 pounds to assassinate the ambassador, it was likely that her finances would be stretched to the limit; therefore, he only asked for the minimum.

After doing all of this, Klein didn’t linger and immediately returned to the real world.

...

Audrey was holding a music score and humming a melody. The red moon was faintly discernible outside the window.

Suddenly, a thick gray fog appeared in front of her. A figure seated on an ancient chair looked down at her and spoke in a low voice.

Audrey let out a breath of relief after hearing Mr. Fool’s response. She was no longer as nervous as she was.

1000 pounds... My debt to Mr. Fool is close to being paid off... I feel so much more relaxed suddenly... Audrey rested the music score against her chest and thought with her dimples showing.

Although she only had 1000 pounds to spend for quite a considerable period of time in the coming days, being put in a tight financial situation, all she needed to do was grit her teeth, and squeezing out a thousand pounds wouldn’t be a problem.

I'll borrow more from Glaint and drag it out with more installments... Audrey had quite a good education in finances; after all, her father was a powerful banker behind the scenes.

...

At noon on Thursday, Klein heard another illusory prayer. He then confirmed that Miss Justice had deposited the money into his anonymous account.

The bank reconciliation and liquidation done in Backlund could be completed on the same day, meaning that from Friday, Klein would be able to withdraw the cash from any Backlund Bank branch in the city.

After lunch, Klein once again saw Mary Gale. She led him outside the Quelaag Club, where the two members were waiting.

One was a well-known surgeon, Aaron Ceres, and the other was the aristocratic equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont.

After greeting each other, the lanky and somewhat aloof doctor wearing gold-rimmed glasses entered the club first, leaving the equestrian teacher, Talim, who had short brown curly hair to converse with Klein amidst smiles.

"If it wasn't for Mary mentioning you, I wouldn't have known that Backlund has had an additional outstanding detective join its ranks. If there's anything I need to do in the future, I'll look for you."

"Then, let me thank you in advance." Klein smiled in response.

According to Mary's introduction on the carriage, he learned that Talim was originally of noble blood. His grandfather had a noble title of viscount, but it was a pity that his grandfather had squandered all his wealth. His father had nearly ten brothers and more than six sisters, and as nobles whose titles were determined by the amount of land they possessed, once the amount of land went beneath a particular standard, the hereditary nobility title would be reduced. However, that also depended on the king's mood.

Talim was unlike the other children of nobility who could obtain a considerable sum of money when they reached adulthood. And due to his grandfather's reputation, he had no means of entering the

government as an employee, or to be a butler of another noble family. Therefore, he could only play to his advantages and became a equestrian teacher for many nobles. His income was quite sizable, with about four hundred pounds a year.

“Sigh, divorce really leads to poverty.” It was unknown if Talim was hinting at Mary Gale’s situation or if he was reminded of his grandfather who seemed to be more of Intis ancestry.

Unable to engage in the conversation, Klein followed him into the Quelaag Club, where he saw a large, brightly lit hall.

Chapter 246: Strange Omen

Aaron and Talim left the Quelaag Club after they separately completed the nomination form. It wasn't a weekend; the former had two more operations in the afternoon, and the latter had to teach Viscount Conrad's youngest son horse-riding. The teenager needed to ensure that he didn't embarrass himself during the Backlund social events in the second half of the year.

Klein watched the valet dressed in a red vest and a maid in a beautiful dress come and go a few times before finally delivering him his own proof of membership and a badge with the symbol of the Frost constellation engraved on it.

"An entry fee of 50 pounds. There are still three and a half months left this year, with an annual fee of 4 pounds a year." The valet in the red vest pushed the two objects to Klein.

Klein took out the 57 pounds which Mary Gale had given him and handed him 54 pounds.

The amount beyond the entry fee and annual fee was Mary's first payment. She was very pleased with how quickly Klein obtained information on Doragu Gale's mistress, as well as her photo.

50 pounds membership... Madam Mary is such a generous lady! While Klein watched the valet and the maid verify the money and confirm the exact amount, he recalled Stelyn Sammer's private introduction.

Mary's father was a co-founder of the Coim Company and had a 20 percent stake. It was originally just a small company that barely made money, but as Backlund's pollution worsened and the demand for anthracite and charcoal increased, the company rapidly expanded to become one of the top ten companies in the capital's industry. As such, Mary's net worth skyrocketed.

The only problem was that when she was married to Doragu Gale, the company was still quite an unknown company. Her father hadn't paid much attention to using the shares as her dowry and didn't proceed with any protection of estate gifting and had instead used the more popular "willing of gifts."

The former referred to the dowry as an independent and separate estate of the woman and not subjected to her husband's control. Even the right-of-use depended on the woman, while the latter assigned the dowry's ownership to the entire family. However, the husband had to immediately make a valid will to promise that if he passed away before his partner, the split of the estate would be two to four times the rights and interests of the dowry received. After which, the rest would proceed according to the normal inheritance laws which could effectively guarantee the livelihood of the widow.

If Mary initiated a divorce before she could get evidence of Doragu's adultery, the Coim Company shares would be divided equally between both parties.

Klein remembered Stelyn saying enviously, "The current value of those shares is currently close to 20,000 gold pounds. Adding the other property in their name, Mary is a truly wealthy lady. Once she's divorced, she will definitely become the target of many men in Backlund, including some nobles."

That's only enough money for Miss Justice to assassinate Ambassador Bakerland twice... Klein suddenly thought about that when he saw the red-vested valet and the good-looking maid bow at him.

"Mr. Moriarty, welcome to the Quelaag Club."

Upon hearing this, Klein picked up the proof of membership and the Frost badge.

The former was made of elastic paper which looked like a card with Klein's name and his membership start date on it.

After applying an imprint of his index finger, the proof of membership was officially ready for use.

The latter was the Quelaag Club's distinctive badge, named for its founding in early November, which corresponded to the month of the Frost constellation. The symbol and the number 192 were printed on the front, followed by "Sherlock Moriarty" imprinted on the back.

"The club now has 192 members?" Klein asked casually.

“Yes, our club doesn’t accept people without a recommendation.” The red-vested valet beamed and introduced, “On the first floor, there’s a buffet cafeteria, bar, library, squash room, conference room, and card room. You can use them all for free. The food and wine are free for your sampling as well. There are 16 lounge rooms and two small conference rooms on the second floor. They are also free, and can be used as long as they aren’t occupied...”

The good-looking maid pointed to the rear and said, “There are two tennis courts on the lawn, totally free of charge. There are two shooting ranges underground, and you only need to pay the corresponding rental fee of the equipment.

“If you aren’t satisfied with the simple buffet, you can order alacarte. We have an exclusive chef, and you just need to pay for the ingredients.”

Board, lodging, and entertainment are all provided for... As expected of a high-end club... Klein sincerely thanked Mrs. Mary.

He smiled warmly and said, “Send someone to show me around so that I can familiarize myself with the environment. Afterward, give me a lounge to take an afternoon nap.”

“Alright.” The red-vested valet made an inviting gesture.

After familiarizing himself with the Quelaag Club’s environment, Klein entered a lounge and carefully studied the layout of the place. He discovered it was similar to a hotel room of the later generation. It was said to be decorated in the Intis-style.

I have to consider how to obtain evidence of Doragu’s affair tomorrow. It’s simply impossible to hide the flash of the camera... In other words, I only have one shot at taking a picture... And if I do that, I’ll definitely be kicked out of the club... I have to think of a safe way... I’ll read through the papers later and try to determine the progress regarding Ian’s case through the news. From there, I can determine which three days I should be guarded... Klein paced back and forth, lost in thought.

At that moment, his heart suddenly palpitated as he tensed up.

Is this the premonition of a Clown? However, there are no scenes in my mind... Klein felt the air around him turn still like it was the calm before the storm.

Soon, this feeling disappeared, as if nothing had happened.

Could it be that danger is approaching? But nothing like this happened when I was attacked by Meursault... Puzzled, Klein pulled out a coin and divined if he would be attacked in the next few days.

The answer was negative.

After thinking for a few seconds, Klein drew the curtains and pretended to take an afternoon nap. He took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

He sat down and pondered for a long time before muttering to himself, "I will be in grave danger in the next few days."

...

After repeating the statement, he flicked the coin again and saw the copper-colored object tumble down and land in his open palm.

This time, the portrait of the king was facing up!

It meant a positive result!

My reaction just now really was an omen that danger is coming... Klein narrowed his eyes and leaned back in his chair.

He was rather puzzled by this matter.

Whether it was as a Seer or Clown, they had never displayed such abilities before. Even if they could predict danger, it was because the target was right in front of him or beside him!

There was nobody around me... From the fact that my divination was misled, it must have involved a relatively higher Sequencer, most likely Bakerland's assistant... In the end, it actually gave me a premonition? This isn't scientific, uh—this doesn't make mystical sense... There must be something else behind it, but I can't be certain why yet... Klein looked around and saw the boundless fog, crimson and still, the palace standing as it had always stood.

He reined in his doubts and temporarily stopped thinking about the reason. Instead, he focused his attention on the attack that was about to occur...

After several more divinations, Klein found that he could only confirm that there would be great danger in the next few days. It couldn't be shortened to three days, two days, or even five hours.

In other words, he could only obtain a somewhat vague revelation.

And in a dream divination, he saw Ian dressed in his old coat, standing in the street with the elegant gas lamps and the blurry crimson moon behind him.

Other than this image, there was nothing else.

"How should I interpret this?" Klein thought for a moment. He could only assume that this was the prelude to danger.

Without further delay, he returned to the real world, left the Quelaag Club, and went to the nearby Hillston branch of the Backlund Bank to withdraw the remaining hundred pounds from his account—the sum of 1000 pounds from Justice hasn't been cleared yet and reconciled. Without the corresponding information sent to the branches, the account wasn't synchronized, and, theoretically speaking, there was a loophole. Klein could withdraw 100 pounds from another branch and seize the opportunity when all the accounts were out of sync.

However, this was only in theory. In order to avoid similar acts, the banks had many rules on anonymous accounts. First, it was to enhance the transmission of similar information in the same city; second, it was to limit a single withdrawal to no more than 500 pounds, and third, if the last withdrawal wasn't done locally, a telegram was needed to inquire about it, and today, Klein encountered the third situation.

Putting away the money, he took a horse carriage to the Backlund Bridge area and entered the Bravehearts Bar.

Under Kaspars's guidance, he saw Maric sitting in the card room. He wasn't surrounded by zombies.

Klein discarded the idea of using his spirituality to wrap Azik's copper whistle, slapped a 100 pounds on the table, and said to the pale Maric, "I agree to the deal.

"I'll pay an advance of 100 pounds. I'll pay another 300 pounds every additional day I'm protected.

"The protection begins now!"

Maric's gaze fell past him and landed somewhere behind him.

He nodded and said, "Alright, she has agreed."

Ah? Klein turned back in surprise only to see the wall and nothing but air.

He secretly activated his Spirit Vision, he but failed to discover anything.

Maric stuffed the 100 pounds into his pocket and said indifferently, "You can return now. She has begun protecting you, in a hidden way."

If I hadn't divined this beforehand, I would definitely think of all of you as cheats... Klein surveyed his surroundings and deliberately acted as though he left with clenched teeth.

Along the way, he would occasionally activate and deactivate his Spirit Vision, constantly observing the outside through the carriage windows, but he didn't find his so-called bodyguard.

Back at 15 Minsk Street, Klein closed the door, went into the bathroom, turned on the tap, and washed his hands.

The sound of water splashing disappeared as he shook off the water droplets and wiped his palms with a towel. Then, he raised his head to look at himself in the mirror to inspect his appearance.

At this moment, he saw himself phasing away in the mirror before transforming into a woman wearing a black regal dress.

The woman had light golden hair and blue eyes. She looked very delicate but her face was abnormally pale.

She wore a small black bonnet, lifted her skirt, and bowed at Klein.

This... Without hiding his surprise, Klein took a few steps back and leaned against the wall.

Only then did he realize that this might be the bodyguard he had hired for 1000 pounds.

The image in the mirror quickly dimmed and Klein saw himself again. Everything had been restored back to normal.

The figure in the mirror was clear, but it was as though the woman in the black regal dress had never appeared.

Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision, but didn't find anything.

Did I just hire a female ghost as my bodyguard? She's even stranger than a female ghost... At the very least, one can see ghosts with Spirit Vision... Klein thoughtfully touched Azik's copper whistle in his pocket, feeling nothing but its cold chill. Like before, it didn't have any additional changes.

She's unaffected by the copper whistle... Seems like she isn't an undead creature... However, I can't be sure. Back then, the copper whistle was buried with me, but the corpses surrounding me didn't act abnormally... Was it because those buried in the cemetery have experienced a send off by the priests and bishops? When does it work and when doesn't it... When this business with the ambassador is over, and if I'm still alive, I'll go to the cemetery and try to figure out the scope of its effect and its limits. I can't always carry a time bomb like this... Klein washed his face and walked out of the bathroom.

Just as he picked up the newspaper in the living room and was going to read it in the living room or bedroom, he heard the doorbell ring.

Klein's mind tensed up when he heard the tinkling sounds. He put on his coat, with all kinds of materials in it, and walked towards the door gingerly.

He clearly knew that danger was approaching in the next few days!

After standing behind the door and waiting for a moment, the scene outside naturally surfaced in Klein's mind.

The crimson moon was faintly discernible in the sky. The elegant gas lamps on both sides of the street lit up the wet road. A boy wearing an old coat stood there. His bright red eyes were deep and adrift.

Ian Wright? Why did he appear? Isn't this what I saw in my dream divination? Is this the prelude to danger? Klein opened the door and took two cautious steps back.

“Detective Moriarty,” Ian took off his brown top hat, bowed, and said in a low voice, “I came to apologize. I’m sorry to have involved you in such a dangerous matter.”

Klein creased his eyebrows and probed, “What you should’ve done is head to the police station.”

Ian looked around and bowed his head.

“I just came out from MI9.”

Ah? Is that the name of the military’s special department? Klein stepped aside, pointed at the living room and said, “Maybe we can have a chat.”

I have to at least know what placed me in this situation... He sighed inwardly.

Ian didn’t stand on ceremony as he followed Klein into the living room and sat in the same spot as he did the last time.

He was just about to open his mouth when Klein suddenly added, “If what you plan on saying will put me in greater danger, then there’s no need to tell me about it.”

“No, everything will soon be over.” Ian had a calmness that was beyond his age.

Klein was relieved and asked out of curiosity, “So, what exactly happened?”

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw a figure emerge from the panes of the oriel window across the room: a black regal dress, long hair tied in a bun, blue eyes, delicate features, and a pale face. It was the woman who had previously greeted Klein in the mirror.

This woman seemed to find an illusory high back chair and sat down. Her left palm supported her right elbow while her right hand supported her face, pretending to listen attentively while appearing expressionless.

For a moment, Klein was left at a loss.

Ian, who had been silent for a few seconds, said softly, “In fact, Detective Zreal is a spy for the Feysac Empire. He adopted several vagrant children and taught them how to gather intelligence. I am one of them.”

So that’s how it is... I was involved in a huge spy conspiracy...

Klein suddenly felt enlightened.

Ian looked at the coffee table and continued, “We have the advantage of age, and are often ignored by others, allowing us to gather a lot of useful information. Two weeks ago, I stumbled upon clues regarding Helmosuin’s manuscript.” “Helmosuin?” Klein found the name familiar.

Ian looked up at him and explained, “Turani von Helmosuin, the greatest scientist after Emperor Roselle, a mathematician, a mechanist, and the father of the second generation difference engine.”

So it’s him! Klein suddenly remembered the relevant information.

He wasn’t only a great scientist, but also a crazy scientist. He believed that the inherent flaw in the existence of humans could only be fixed through machines. He loved eating sugar as if it was his own energy source. He mysteriously disappeared while researching a third generation difference engine, and was an important figure that every country was trying to find.

“His manuscript? Does the manuscript involve third generation difference engines?” Klein asked probingly.

A difference engine was a mechanical device for computing. It could effectively improve the efficiency of scientific research and various projects. In Klein’s opinion, it was an alternative computer in the Age of Steam. Of course, it could only do computation at present.

Ian shook his head.

“I’m not sure. I didn’t actually see it. Perhaps, it had some related ideas.”

He paused for a moment, then went on to recount what had happened.

“When I reported this to Detective Zreal, he was very happy and told me to follow up on that lead while he immediately reported it to his superior.

“It took me some time to determine where the manuscript was, but I was afraid of the danger, so I didn’t steal it directly. I decided to return to Detective Zreal, and after that, it was as I told you. Detective Zreal’s house was infiltrated while many of the tiny traps were not restored, and he didn’t respond to my contact request. The Zmanger gang tried to capture me...

“With your help, I confirmed the death of Detective Zreal. I took a fake tooth from his corpse. Oh, that happened after we parted.

“Detective Zreal told me that, inscribed on the inside of the fake tooth, there was a method to urgently contact his superior. It was a method that even he didn’t know of and was something he would only remove if an accident occurred.”

Klein nodded slightly and said, “So you sent a telegram?”

A rare look of surprise flashed across Ian’s face as he asked, “Did the people from MI9 tell you that?”

“No, a friend of mine happened to see you on Bacardi Street.” Klein casually made up an excuse.

“I see.” Ian nodded in depression. “I got in touch with Detective Zreal’s superior in Backlund via telegram and arranged the time, place, and manner of meeting, but soon enough, I was found by the Zmanger gang. No, to be exact, it was an intelligence officer of the Intis Republic. That was what the people from MI9 people told me.

“Fortunately, MI9 arrived in time, and both sides engaged in a chaotic battle. I took this opportunity to escape.

“However, when I met with Detective Zreal’s superior this afternoon, I was once again ambushed by the Intis intelligence officers. Unfortunately, I was caught by them, and I was very afraid of dying, so I told them everything that I knew. However, they didn’t keep their promise and still wanted to kill me. At that moment, MI9 finally found me.”

It is only during such times when you look like a fifteen or sixteen year old teenager... Just as Klein was reflecting over this, he suddenly thought of a problem from what Ian had just said.

Back when he discovered that something important was left behind on Zreal's corpse and that Ian had successfully taken it away, he had written the matter off, thinking that the Beyonder was lacking in skill, and that the Beyonder had missed out on something because the mediumship provided little useful information.

However, after confirming that the ambassador had a MidSequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway, the situation became extremely peculiar. With powerful mediumship, it was impossible for the fake tooth to not be discovered.

Leaving the body in such a remote and hard to find place didn't seem like a trap.

Combined with Ian's description, the answer was obvious.

Klein nodded and said, "Have you ever thought of the possibility that Zreal's superior has traitors around him, a traitor who has defected to the Intis intelligence services?

"That's also why Zreal was exposed and killed when he obtained the clue to the manuscript, as well as why you were ambushed."

It was because the Intis ambassador had information about Zreal's superior which was why he didn't pay much attention to the urgent communication method inscribed on the inside of the tooth!

Zreal's report to his superior directly led to his demise!

Ian fell into a daze when he heard that. It took him quite a while before he clenched his fists in anger, trying hard to compose himself as he said, "I didn't think of that. You really are an excellent detective..."

He quietly let out a breath of air and changed the topic.

"I have divulged the whereabouts of the manuscript to MI9 and everything else. They also mentioned your predicament in passing. Heh, they didn't suspect me of lying, nor did they send anyone to watch me. All of them went to vie for the manuscript. However, with

that kind of pressure, no one can lie." Having said that, Ian stood up and gave a deep bow.

"Please allow me to apologize again.

"Sorry to have involved you in this. Actually, you don't need to hide anything for me."

Having understood the entire situation, Klein smiled and said, "No, the main problem in this matter was because I made a mistake that made me end up in my current situation."

As he was listening, he used Ian's description of the entire situation and his reflections of the past few days and confirmed that he had made two mistakes.

When I discovered that Ian's matter ran deeper than it appeared, I still accepted the request. That wasn't a problem since I only felt that it involved gangs, and there would be, at most, one or two Beyonders who wouldn't dare expose themselves. But the divination lacked enough information and ended with a failure... This was within the limits of what I could've resolved by myself, and typically speaking, there wouldn't have been any trouble. I could even take the opportunity to come into contact with Backlund's Beyonders.

After finding Zreal's corpse and confirming that the matter ran deep, I should've considered the sensitivity of my identity and decisively extricated myself from this case. I should've let Ian deal with the subsequent matters himself. This wouldn't be problematic and would be a rather careful choice.

One of the mistakes I made was that I didn't flinch or reveal anything about Ian when Meursault came to me. I only thought that he was from a gang, and that there were some Beyonders behind that gang. Who would've guessed that it would involve a figure like the Intis ambassador; even more so, I never expected Meursault to be so rash. After failing his mission, he didn't threaten, intimidate me or proceed with other options. Instead, he came straight to kill me so that mediumship could be performed. He didn't even give me the chance to regret my decision. As a result, my situation worsened.

So, this isn't too subjective or too serious a mistake.

The one mistake that really caused me to be in such a passive situation was a tiny mistake I made from the very beginning. I had rented the house and accepted the mission as Sherlock Moriarty without donning a disguise!

This resulted in me not being able to flee after my identity as a Beyonder was exposed to the ambassador. Even as I acted horrified and frantic, making MI9 and the police department believe that my taking flight would only be normal, I didn't dare flee. I was afraid that when the ambassador failed to find a target for revenge, he would inform the officials about me. And according to my experience as a Nighthawk, most official enforcers like the Nighthawks, Machinery Hivemind, and Mandated Punishers harbor animosity towards uncontrolled Beyonders. They definitely wouldn't ignore me just because I'm a Low-Sequence Beyonder and would begin an investigation.

In time, my looks will be clear evidence. I will then be pursued by High-Sequence Beyonders from the Church of the Goddess because I resurrected despite having been involved with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact.

There's no chance for such matters to be suddenly forgotten or thought of as nothing by others. I had to plan for the worst case scenario in advance, and if I only reacted when the ambassador took action, it would definitely be too late. Whether it's an assassination, finding a bodyguard, or buying items, all of them will require time.

Only if the ambassador and his assistant dies or attention is diverted to the investigation of his death will I be able to resolve this latent danger. His assistant doesn't have an official status, so he can't interact with the officials. For a mere Sequence 9 or Sequence 8 at best, someone whose whereabouts are unknown, there's no reason to go through the effort to report me.

Of course, his death is the best outcome, then there won't be any latent danger.

Compared to finding Mr. Azik for help or having attention placed on me because of 0-08 again, as well as being pursued by HighSequence Beyonders, assassinating the ambassador is the relatively simpler choice... Even it fails, I can only bear one of the two outcomes...

Sigh, everything originated from a small oversight at the beginning. I just imagined that in a metropolis with over 5 million people and few people knowing me while I deliberately avoided the Nighthawks, there was no need for me to don a disguise every day, since it would be easier for others to notice something amiss. Yet, for such a small mistake, I would have to pay over 10,000 gold pounds as the price without having any guarantee of resolving it...

I'm really like a Clown, with one mistake triggering a chain reaction, only to result in a desperate attempt to balance myself so as to please the audience...

This is all because of my lack of experience. This is the first time in my two lifetimes combined that I've ever been a fugitive.

Once this matter is completely resolved, exposing my identity as a Beyonder would no longer be that dangerous. They would only think that I obtained a potion while finding a bodyguard and not doubt my origins. Of course, I'll have to get used to wearing glasses and a mustache in the future so that the people around me will gradually get used to my new image. In the future when they ask me about me, they will only think of this new image.

Having thought through the entire matter, Klein's laugh became more pronounced, making Ian feel strange.

"It's time for me to leave. I'll need to disappear for a while; otherwise, I might be thrown into jail." Ian put on his hat, bade farewell, and left.

Klein didn't stop him, watching him disappear into the crimson moonlight, while the woman by the oriel window had disappeared without him realizing it.

With both sides being aware of the whereabouts of Helmosuin's manuscript, this matter would come to an end tonight... Therefore, the ambassador would have the freedom to take revenge... Is this the reason for the impending danger? Klein gained a rough understanding of the divination results and the inexplicable omen.

If he didn't have the Language of Foulness charm or the powerful bodyguard that cost him 1000 pounds for three days, he would've shamelessly gone to the police station or the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery's headquarters in Backlund, Saint Hierländ Cathedral for a temporary stay. He could avoid any possible attacks and await the assassination of the ambassador. As for how successful the assassination would be, Klein wasn't confident either. He had already considered the worst outcome and had a plan for it.

But now, with the double the preparations, he no longer wanted to avoid it. He would stay at home and pretend that he knew nothing.

Deep down, he was even looking forward to having his attackers come knocking at his door.

Sequence 9 Hunter Meursault was killed by me. If they send someone else again, They would at least be a Sequence 7, or even a Sequence 6 or 5. They might even come in numbers, but regardless, as long as I finish them, I'll obtain formulas and Beyonder characteristics. I can then make up for some of my losses... Yes, I'll tell Miss Bodyguard that I had good luck and managed to benefit from the black ear that I bought and became a Beyonder. After all, when the battle becomes intense, there's no way to hide it at that point. Besides, what I'm saying is nearly the truth. I did benefit quite significantly from the black ear... As Klein considered what would soon follow, he almost instinctively drew the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

May the Goddess bless me that the Beyonder who comes is the one from the Seer pathway! He prayed silently.

As he thought of this, he looked around the room for his bodyguard. He was worried that she would run away without a sound after hearing the whole story.

The lights in the dining room were warm, illuminating the coffee table, sofa, and chairs. There was no one else in the room except him.

As Klein gradually grew nervous, he suddenly saw a face appear on the glass cover of the gas lamp in the living room. The face was pale, with pale gold hair and delicate looks.

This lady is quite confident in her own strength... Klein's mind calmed down, and he whispered to himself, "I'm also a Beyonder.

"I made a gamble on an item I bought from Kaspars's gathering and benefited from it, but it was only beneficial for me."

What he said was true. No matter what method he had to face, these sentences would endure a truth test.

But when these two sentences were put together, one would think that the benefits made him a Beyonder.

The face on the glass cover nodded slightly and quickly disappeared without any other reaction.

Klein's expression didn't seem to change, but he secretly exhaled in his heart.

Without taking off his coat, he went back to the sofa and picked up a newspaper and started reading.

After a while, the tinkling sound echoed again. Someone had rung his doorbell again.

Who is it? Klein immediately tensed up. He stuffed his hands into his pockets, touching his tarot cards and Language of Foulness charm.

He slowly walked towards the door, and with the help of his abilities as a Clown, he predicted what he would see after opening the door.

The crimson moon was still faintly visible, the elegant gas lamps were unchanged, and a sergeant in a black-and-white checkered uniform with three chevrons on his epaulets was impatiently waiting by the door.

He had a short, brown beard and he was none other than the sergeant who had dealt with Sherlock Moriarty's case of selfdefense.

I think Jurgen mentioned his name. Sergeant Faxine? Well, I can receive the ten-pound bail tomorrow or the next day... What is he doing here? Did MI9 send him to find Ian Wright? Or to inform me that I should temporarily hide away from danger? Confused, Klein grabbed the handle.

...

Inside the Intis embassy of Backlund's West Borough, the lights were on. The scent of various perfumes and alcohol, accompanied by melodious melodies stretched out to every corner.

A ball was being held.

During his years as an ambassador, Bakerland had often held balls at the embassy, inviting the kingdom's bankers, big factory owners, philanthropists, and other well-known, rich and powerful people, as well as lawyers. Random opportunities were also given to some of the lower-ranked merchants.

In this atmosphere, he would tell the guests about the prosperity and openness of Trier, and how the Intis Republic was no longer dominated by the likes of the nobles, bankers, factory owners, and lawyers. They, directly and indirectly, took over a large portion of the parliamentary seats, determining the direction of the government policies, enjoying true freedom and high statuses.

Today, Bakerland was doing the same thing. With a wine glass in hand, he flitted around the guests, as if to prove that he was present at the ball without leaving.

They should've gotten the manuscript by now... After learning that Ian Wright appeared at the telegraph office from that trembling detective, I've been putting plans into action. Now is the time to reap the rewards... Bakerland, with his thin but classy face, took a sip of the blood-like Aurmir wine and headed for the balcony, intending to take a breath of the cool night air.

After learning that Ian had sent the telegram, as a veteran conspiracist and professional intelligence officer, Bakerland was acutely aware that Ian was contacting his superior's superior. Therefore, he quickly made

the double-spy, that had infiltrated the Feysac Empire's Backlund intelligence team, investigate and obtain the meeting time, location, and manner agreed upon by Ian and the "team leader."

After that, he pretended that nothing had happened and continued to send people to look for Ian near Bacardi Street. He successfully found Ian and also attracted the attention of MI9.

According to his plan, his intelligence officer had deliberately let Ian go, so that MI9 would think that they were on the same starting line.

After paralyzing his main opponent, he called in other unexposed intelligence agents to ambush Ian and the Feysac Empire's "team leader." He wanted to find the manuscript and smuggle it out of the Loen Kingdom without being detected by the MI9.

The situation had progressed as smoothly as he had expected, but the news that came back in the evening left his heart heavy.

People from MI9 had actually appeared!

They had appeared despite being supposedly fooled!

With Rosago around, it's definitely not because of divination. Besides MI9 isn't good at divination at all... That means we have a spy among our ranks... Let's hope that Rosago can be one step ahead of them and grab the manuscript to hand over to Shadow for extraction... Bakerland had deliberately organized the ball in order to avoid suspicion, but as such, he was unable to involve himself with the developments. All he could do was pray that his subordinates would amount to something.

According to his plans, once Rosago succeeded, he would immediately transfer the items to another intelligence officer, one that had never been activated before. Then Rosago would lure MI9 away and, by creating some trouble, keep them out of "sight" and distract them from his partner. During this process, Bakerland requested Rosago to kill the detective while he was at it.

If it wasn't for him, no one from MI9 would've known about it. Everything would've gone smoothly... My involvement with the Zmanger gang wouldn't have been revealed, and I wouldn't be

transferred back to the country... He actually didn't run away, thinking that MI9 would keep protecting him, and that staying at home is safer than running away? Bakerland rubbed his face.

He had already received orders that after the operation regarding the manuscript had been completed, and he would hand all intelligence matters to the highest ranking military officer at the embassy and await the arrival of the new ambassador.

Bakerland was rather reluctant to part with Backlund. Despite the bad weather and heavy pollution, Backlund was one of the most prosperous cities in the world.

Besides, the ladies here are more conservative unlike those sluts back home. Slowly seducing them into bed and removing their restraint, bit by bit, is a very satisfying and fascinating achievement. Unfortunately, I have to bid farewell to these beautiful ladies... Bakerland thought gloomily, and he felt more and more resentful of the detective who dared to put up resistance.

As for Rosago's own safety, Bakerland wasn't worried at all. He believed that as long as Rosago wanted to, as long as he wasn't targeted by a High-Sequence Beyonder, he would be able to escape immediately. This was because Rosago had special Beyonder powers.

As he lost himself in thought, Bakerland's eyes suddenly lit up. He saw a young lady in a crimson dress standing at the edge of the balcony with a glass of wine in her hand.

She had a pretty face and a gentle temperament. Her hair was ink black and luxuriant, and her light brown eyes seemed to speak volumes.

Bakerland went over at once and began to chat with her. He learned that the lady was the daughter of a timber merchant named Eileen, and that her father wasn't very rich and was trying to make his way up the ranks.

With his status as Intis ambassador, Bakerland quickly received Eileen's affection.

After sharing two dances, their bodies became more intimate.

“Beautiful lady, I’d like to invite you to my room to sample some Aurmir wine of 1286.”

Eileen replied, almost without any hesitation, “Alright.”

The two of them left the ballroom and secretly went to the second floor. They entered Bakerland’s room, and he ordered the guards to stay away from them and not to disturb him.

Before the so-called Aurmir wine 1286 appeared, Bakerland had passionately brought Eileen to the bed.

While romping around in bed, Eileen’s simple skirt came undone as her pure, fair arms hugged him.

While her hands gripped Bakerland’s shoulders, her nails and veins suddenly sprouted black, thin, fluffy “spider feet!” *Bang!*

Eileen’s eyes suddenly bulged as white foam poured out of her mouth.

Bakerland retracted the fist that he had used to hit her abdomen and stood up from the bed. He no longer had the hasty actions from before and instead, wore a cold expression.

“Who sent you?” Bakerland asked in a deep voice.

Eileen attempted to stand up, but the pain was too much to bear. Her eyes were filled with shock and fear.

Seeing the expression on the pretty girl’s face, Bakerland smiled and said, “It’s true that I’m into beautiful ladies, but I know this problem of mine. So, every time I meet a beautiful lady, I’m especially careful.

“Speak, who sent you?

“Don’t bother resisting. I’m very good at using fire.”

Eileen clamped her mouth shut and angrily looked at the thin, smiling face of the ambassador, with a touch of terror.

Bakerland stretched out his right hand which was covered in a plume of orange flames that danced silently.

He took two steps forward, making a gesture as if he was pressing his palm against Eileen's skin.

This made Eileen think of the descriptions in many novels in which cruel interrogators would use red-hot iron to brand their target's body, bringing about an extremely painful experience.

"No, I can't be that brutal to such a beautiful lady." Bakerland suddenly stopped his outstretched right palm and chuckled softly.

He shook suddenly, turning the orange flame into a long red whip.

The long whip ignited the air around it which took on the form of thorns.

Pow!

Bakerland lashed his flaming whip at Eileen, burning her clothes and leaving a dark mark on her skin. Her face contorted as she screamed.

"Who sent you?" Bakerland asked again in a gentle voice.

Eileen's lips quivered a few times before she finally opened them.

"It was..."

As Bakerland subconsciously listened for the answer, his eyes suddenly turned bloodshot.

Oh no! Bakerland jerked back and rolled to the ground.

In the spot where he had been standing, a flame rose up and formed a wall of fire.

Splat! Splat! Splat! Rain-like blood and flesh splattered against the wall and produced sizzling sounds.

Some of them penetrated the flame, leaving a thin trail of blood on the ground.

At the end of this path was the Intis ambassador, Bakerland, who had stood up once again.

He saw that Eileen's abdomen had been torn open and two arms wrapped in viscous liquid were sticking out from inside.

With a sudden push of the two arms, a figure drilled its way out from the belly of the beautiful Eileen. "It" was covered in a thick, squirming blood-red liquid that continuously dripped down, and it was about the size of an adult male.

It was hard to imagine that a normal woman like Eileen, with no protrusion in her abdomen, would actually have such a thing hidden inside her body!

How was it stored in there!?

Boom!

The body below Eileen's head exploded completely, turning into pure flesh and blood, surging into the form of a humanoid figure, and mixing with the dripping liquid to turn into a strange red robe.

The figure revealed its true appearance. It was so beautiful that it looked like a woman. The blood-red robe it wore looked like a blossoming flower under the illumination of the flames.

"Rose Bishop!" As a veteran intelligence officer, Bakerland immediately identified the name of the corresponding Sequence before him.

Sequence 6 of the Secrets Suppliant pathway, Rose Bishop.

Every Rose Bishop was an expert when it came to flesh and blood magic!

Beyonders at this Sequence could hide inside the bodies of others, thereby avoiding all sorts of investigations.

But the moment they emerge, the hosts would lose their lives. “For the Lord!” Eileen’s remaining head let out a low cry and closed her eyes forever.

The Rose Bishop stretched out its right hand and tapped its chest four times in the order of bottom to top, right to left.

With the color of blood and the light from the flames reflecting in his eyes, he looked at Bakerland and took a sudden step forward with his right foot, passing through the wall of fire. He didn’t receive any damage from the fire, with only dark red liquid that continuously dripped down.

Bakerland retreated once again as he suddenly raised his voice.

“Someone! Help me!”

Although his most capable assistant, Rosago, and several intelligence agents had been sent on a mission, there was still no lack of Beyonders in the embassy. They were military officials who had received permission from the Loen Kingdom. They were the defensive forces that were available!

One Sequence 5, one Sequence 6, three Sequence 7s, and a combination of nearly ten Sequence 8s and 9s.

Bakerland’s voice echoed around the room, but it didn’t exit the premises. The music outside didn’t stop and the ball continued.

It was as though the room had become a completely isolated world!

“This...” Bakerland stopped his shouting, narrowed his eyes, and looked around.

The Rose Bishop was in no hurry to act. He said with a chuckle, “It was by your own will, the rules that were decided by yourself.

“You told the guards not to disturb you or come near, or let anyone close.

“Yes... I simply magnified your will and rules and made a slight distortion. If you want to escape this isolation, you have to defeat yourself.”

Bakerland's expression changed slightly. What appeared to be the compliance of rules was, in fact, a distortion of them. The characteristic of using the power of authority to serve oneself made him think of another Sequence's name.

"Baron of Corruption!" Bakerland growled.

This was the Lawyer pathway, which was Sequence 6 of the Black Emperor pathway.

Before he could finish his sentence, Bakerland's face suddenly turned extremely gloomy as he blurted out, "Shepherd! You're a Shepherd!

"Who are you from the Aurora Order? Mr. A?

"Why are you assassinating me?

The Rose Bishop, no—Shepherd chuckled.

"You don't need to know who I am.

"Accept the Lord's blessings..."

His body suddenly stiffened before he could finish his sentence. It was as though his joints were covered in rust, and he seemed to have turned into a puppet.

Bakerland laughed rapturously. The gloominess from before disappeared in an instant. He took out a white handkerchief from his left breast pocket and wiped the corner of his mouth.

"I'm glad that you were able to chat with me for so long. It gave me enough time."

After the white handkerchief was taken away, a thumb-sized head emerged from his left breast pocket. It was the head of a puppet with completely black eyes!

The Shepherd opened his mouth and was about to speak when he heard a hollow voice that seemed to come from afar.

"You..."

After pausing, his body suddenly burgeoned, and his skin turned dark. Two curved goat horns with strange, sinister patterns sprouted from his

head, as well as wings behind his back that reeked of sulfur when they flapped.

The Shepherd instantly moved three meters forward, having transformed into a devil-like creature.

But even so, it was as if every one of his joints was firmly shackled. His movements were stiff and slow, and his thoughts were starting to blur.

“You still have the power of the Devil? As expected of a Shepherd, let me send you to your Lord.” Without further ado, a flaming long spear with a blazing white tip materialized in the middle of Bakerland’s right palm.

He bent his back, about to throw the spear to pin the Shepherd to the wall and burn him to ashes.

Sequence 7 Pyromaniac of the Conspirer pathway had the ancient name, Fire Mage!

Cough! Cough! Cough! Cough!

At that moment, Bakerland began to cough violently, coughing so hard that he felt as if he was about to spit out his heart and lungs. His flaming spear lost control from his coughing and disappeared, inch by inch. His face flushed red and his forehead was scorching hot from his coughing fit.

His influence on his enemy, that he derived from a mystical item, was lifted. The Shepherd was freed from his sluggishness and returned to normal.

“Why do you think I was having such a long chat with you? How does severe pneumonia and an unstoppable cough feel like?” the devilish face asked with the corners of his mouth hooked.

Upon hearing these words, Bakerland suddenly recalled the enemy’s beautiful and enchanting appearance when he first appeared, and regretfully said, “Cough! Cough. A disease!

“You... Cough! Cough! Killed a... Cough! Cough! Cough! A Demoness of Affliction!”

The Shepherd dispelled his devil-like form as his figure turned into a series of stacked afterimages.

He chuckled and said, “No, I only received a gift from Saint Tenebrous.”

“I know Conspirers have all sorts of means available to them, so, I’ll be using my strongest ability now, so that you won’t have any unnecessary hope.”

A book appeared before him, a translucent and blurry book.

The ancient book flipped rapidly and with a soft chant, “I came, I saw, I record.

“As long as I have recorded it, I’ll be able to use it once. This is an ability that Saint Tenebrous had deliberately demonstrated to me. Although I only have half of its original effect, it’s still enough.” The Shepherd’s voice turned hollow, and his body was enveloped by the darkness that spewed out from the book.

He quickly turned into a small giant, about 2.3 to 2.4 meters tall. His entire body was covered in cold, black armor. At the space where his eyes should be, there were two glowing crimson red blobs.

The dark knight raised a broadsword in his hands, took a step forward, and delivered an unrelenting chop.

“No! Why?”

As Bakerland tragically screamed, the layers of flames that gushed out of his body were split apart. All sorts of lights exploded and were split open, and his body was split into two halves.

Thud! Bakerland fell to the ground. No blood came out of his massive wound. Even his soul seemed to be corroded and destroyed by the black sword that didn’t seem to exist.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The plumes of fire that spewed out of Bakerland’s body lost control, causing the blast that shook the room and sent the glass rattling. And at that moment, the isolation that had been created by his own will vanished with his death.

The Shepherd didn't stop, nor did he wait for the Beyonder characteristic to appear. He restored his inconspicuous appearance and seized the opportunity before the military officials of the embassy arrived, sprinting through the layers of walls and into the darkness outside.

...

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein paused with his right hand on the handle.

He decided to throw a coin before he opened the door.

Since Ian had already come, the revelation that he had seen in the dream had already happened. That meant that danger could come at any moment!

While muttering the words "the visitor outside will bring danger," Klein flicked up a quarter pence and watched it fall to his palm, its number side facing up.

Negative... Klein muttered to himself as he reached for the handle.

However, he didn't let his guard down. He knew that there was a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the same pathway as him on the ambassador's side who could interfere with his divination.

If it was that person, it would be normal for him to get the wrong result!

It's a pity that I don't have the time or an opportunity to investigate it above the gray fog... Klein looked through the door for a moment with his Spirit Vision. Realizing that nothing was amiss, he opened the door and took two steps back.

Dressed in a black-and-white checkered uniform, Sergeant Faxine took off his hat and said with a serious expression, "I've been sent by the higher-ups to tell you that you must be careful tonight and tomorrow. Be careful of strangers."

"Alright." Klein nodded solemnly.

Sergeant Faxine touched his short hair and said, "There are other arrangements. I'll explain them to you in detail, and you can decide on your own."

He cast his gaze towards the living room.

Klein made a polite gesture of invitation, then watched as Sergeant Faxine closed the door behind him, walked over to the sofa, and sat down.

"What are your plans?" Klein kept his coat on, hands still in his pockets.

Faxine leaned forward slightly, clasped his hands, and said, "You should be well aware that you have offended that ambassador. Tonight or tomorrow will be the most dangerous period for you.

"The higher-ups have given you three choices. The first is to go to the Holy Wind Cathedral for two days. I know that you're a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, but Saint Hierländ Cathedral is too far, and it's easy for trouble to arise on the way there."

Kleinn nodded indiscernibly and waited for the sergeant to give him the second choice.

Suddenly, his vision blurred and his head went numb. He felt as if there was a layer of thick glass around him.

He saw that Sergeant Faxine's opening and closing of his mouth was slowing down, and he noticed that his thoughts had become sluggish.

This feeling was very familiar. Klein suddenly thought of the puppet from the Antigonus family, Sealed Artifact 2-049!

Back then, he was repeatedly affected in a similar way, but he had been awakened by Captain Dunn Smith and the others. To ensure that the others could detect any abnormalities in a timely manner, they kept stretching and retracting their arms!

The Antigonus family holds the Seer pathway... This person's ability is similar to the Antigonus family's puppet... He is the MidSequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway... As expected, it's him... Klein came to his senses, but there was no Dunn Smith to wake him.

The muscles on Officer Faxine's face started squirming. Soon, he turned into a gentleman with black hair and blue eyes. He had a handsome face and a tiny stubble.

He said with a smile, "Given time, this is one of the most difficult abilities to deal with for anyone that isn't a HighSequence Beyonder."

As he spoke, Klein saw the image of the woman in the black regal dress appear in the glass of the oriel window.

She walked slowly and stiffly out of the glass; her blonde hair, her delicate face, and her pale face made her seem more like a doll than a living person.

"I never thought that you would be able to hire such a powerful bodyguard. If it wasn't for my divination ahead of time, I might have died here. What kind of compensation did you pay? By the way, my name is Rosago." Rosago didn't look back as he continued smiling at Klein, but he didn't expect a fluent answer from the man he controlled.

At that moment, he suddenly felt a cold breeze blow across his neck, causing his hair to stand on end as goosebumps appeared all over his body.

There seemed to be an invisible person at his back, breathing down his neck!

Rosago laughed, raised his left hand, and snapped his fingers.

Pow!

Flames suddenly soared up from his back, and a transparent shadow was set ablaze, quickly turning into ashes.

In Klein's vision, these motions were all broken down into a grid of images.

This wasn't because his opponent had turned slow, but was a result of his increasingly sluggish thoughts.

He already has me under control... Why isn't he directly... killing me... Do all villains like to engage in lengthy monologues... No, he's not stupid... He's trying to conceal something with this discussion... Klein tried to think, to figure out the problem, but his thoughts were moving at an irresistibly slow pace.

He looked intently at Rosago, taking in every detail of his.

Finally, he saw a figure in each of Rosago's eyes, a figure with blonde hair, blue eyes, a pale face, and a dark black Gothic regal dress!

And at this moment, the woman was still behind Rosago. She was still near the oriel window, walking towards him like a manipulated puppet.

He hasn't really controlled her yet... She's still trying to resist and struggle... They are tussling in the realm of mystery... I need to do something... I need to tip the scales of balance... Klein turned his attention to the Language of Foulness charm he was holding in his left hand. It was cold and slippery, filled with evil.

He was glad that he hadn't let down his guard and maintained a battle-ready state the entire time.

He could only injure himself to injure his opponent! Klein gathered his strength and struggled to speak.

His vocal cords seemed to have rotted, and his throat squirmed in difficulty.

He hoarsely said in ancient Hermes with a staccato rhythm, "Foulness!"

As his voice echoed in the air, Klein felt a corrosive pain in his left palm, and he heard illusory whispers that could drive a person mad.

This was a state that he was familiar with, and it didn't affect his subsequent attempts.

The attempt was to inject most of his spirituality into the Language of Foulness charm which didn't require the control of his body.

In three seconds, the voice of the True Creator would descend upon the physical world and burrow into the ears of the creature closest to him!

“3!”

The prelude, the din, the illusory, the evil whispers spread out in an instant. Klein felt his scalp tingle, his mind abuzz, his veins throbbing. He found it difficult to focus his mind.

A coffee table away from him, Rosago’s expression had suddenly turned adrift. His face swelled up as the woman’s figure in his eyes suddenly became clearer.

“2!”

The pale woman in the black regal dress behind him quickened her actions, but soon, she frowned in pain.

At this moment, Klein felt the weakening of the influence as he wished, regaining his smooth thought processes and felt as though his joints were once again filled with lubricant!

Having experienced ravings all this time, he endured the madness and pain, quickly pulling out and throwing the Language of Foulness charm from his left palm at Rosago.

“1!”

The iron-black charm, with its many symbols and sinisterlooking patterns, melted. Rosago had just regained some of his composure and was trying to leap to the side when he saw a rich darkness and heard a murmur that contained immense knowledge and extreme madness.

No human being was able to describe such a sound. All the veins in Rosago’s head protruded as if they were about to explode.

He tumbled to the ground, writhing and struggling as his skin ruptured, inch by inch, revealing the flesh underneath.

At the same time, Klein and the blonde woman with blue eyes also failed to resist the pain as they fell to the ground. Each of them let out tragic screams, the excruciating pain felt like someone had stabbed their temples with a drill rod.

Their eyes turned bloodshot as red liquid ran down their noses. They could neither see nor feel the outside world.

The experienced Klein was the first to recover. He staggered to his feet and saw that Rosago had torn off his clothes and stripped off his skin, exposing his flesh and veins.

He was like a legendary red monster that had been skinned. He constantly tumbled around the ground while groaning in pain, as if he was about to lose control.

Klein didn't wait for the result, because he couldn't afford the possibility of the other party gaining the benefits, as well as becoming a devotee of the True Creator.

He believed that the evil god was definitely infuriated as well.

Pulling out his revolver and adjusting the barrel to the firing position, Klein took two steps forward, circled around the coffee table, and put the muzzle of his gun against Rosago's head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Dressed in his black double-breasted suit, he stared at his enemy intently as he shot five rounds in a row, watching his enemy's head swell and explode into a mixture of red, white, and black that splattered all over the floor.

Captain, thank you for demonstrating this to me before... Klein panted while he lowered his revolver before he beamed brightly.

In front of him, Rosago's headless corpse faltered a little before collapsing to the side of the sofa.

Only then did the woman in the black Gothic regal dress stop her screams. Her struggles and rolling slowed down, but her skin seemed to turn a lot more translucent.

Seeing the flesh on Rosago's corpse squirm, Klein didn't hesitate to use his self-created Requiem Charm.

Under the calm and serene atmosphere, the corpse finally stopped moving.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein thought of something. He took out another charm and chanted in a low voice, "Crimson!"

Then, he injected some of his spirituality into it and threw this charm at his bodyguard—the woman with the pale golden hair and pale white face.

As the slumbering powers emanated, the woman who was still weakened under the effect of the lingering voices instantly quietened down as she fell into a deep slumber.

Just to be sure, Klein threw another Slumber Charm, afraid that he would be interrupted during what he was planning to do next.

15 Minsk Street once again had its peace. This time, nothing was broken; only the ground was contaminated, as the fight between the three parties was mystical and beyond the physical realm.

Looking at Rosago's corpse and then at his sleeping bodyguard, Klein mocked himself, "It's also good to court death often. At least I gained some immunity."

He didn't attempt the mediumship ritual immediately because Rosago was now tainted by the True Creator, and directly communicating with the spirit was tantamount to committing suicide.

But that didn't mean Klein had no choice. He planned on doing the mediumship above the gray fog by bringing Rosago with him!

With his current spirit body's level, even with the augmentation provided by Azik's copper whistle, he was unable to move a portable camera, much less a corpse that was several times heavier. However, mediumship wasn't done with a corpse, but the channeling of the remnant spirituality!

Klein took out a candle, quickly set up a ritual ceremony, summoned himself, and responded to himself, turning into a special spirit body.

After becoming a spirit, he saw the distinct remnants of Rosago's spirituality, and he realized that Miss Bodyguard's physical condition was a little strange. She was actually in quite a similar state as he was, but there were also great differences.

Without wasting any time thinking, Klein carried Azik's copper whistle, wrapped the remaining of Rosago's spirituality, and entered above the gray fog.

After conjuring the appropriate ritual items and setting up a simple altar, Klein quickly began the mediumship ritual.

During this process, he was shocked to discover that he no longer needed to pray to anyone to be able to directly communicate with the spirit. It was like he was a real spirit medium!

Phew... Is this some special power that I possess in the mysterious space above the gray fog? A thought flashed through Klein's mind as he began to recite the divination statement. "The potion formulas for the Seer pathway."

"The potion formulas for the Seer pathway."

...

Klein leaned back in his chair and tried to communicate with the spirit via dream divination.

In a gray illusory world that didn't seem surreal, a gas lamp suddenly lit up, illuminating the stone slabs on the ground and a desk with a goatskin scroll placed on top of it.

After the Seer and Clown formulas appeared one after another, Rosago stood there with a fur shirt, listening to a voice of unknown origins.

"Before the advancement, I have to warn you that you've been too reliant on divination.

"Divination is a revelation, a result; it is unable to tell us the process. For example, you might decide to invest all your money because your divination says that a railway stock can make money. But in fact, what that revelation really means is that in the long run, in thirty years, the railway stock will make money, and before that, it will fall more than it rises. Fate isn't so easy to master, and there are many times when it's impossible to quantify it. Divination isn't all-powerful.

"In addition, divination can be interfered with and cause you to be misled. There are too many things in this world that cannot be understood. If you completely rely on divination, then you'll definitely die because of it.

"Divination is a revelation. It must be combined with one's own carefulness, caution, and self-control."

Rosago was unable to divine the corresponding danger because the Language of Foulness was involved with the mysterious space above the gray fog, and that led to him dying at my hands. Otherwise, with his mystical abilities, it would've been difficult for Miss Bodyguard and I to escape today... This is also a reminder for me. Even if I had the gray fog to isolate all interferences, I cannot afford to be careless. No matter how certain my actions are, I need to leave some leeway...

From these words, it seems like they aren't aware of the "acting method." Otherwise, some of those words could be directly summed up as being respectful and fearful of fate... As his thoughts raced, Klein heard Rosago's reply as he unfurled the parchment.

"Sequence 7, Magician:

"Main ingredients: One true root of a Mist Treant, all the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther."

"Supplementary ingredients: 60 ml of purified water, 30 ml of Mist Treant's juice, 3 grams of Droplet Gem powder, 4 drops of Fantasy Grass essential oil."

Magician... This is also part of a circus. It can form the foundations of a circus with Seers and Clowns... Klein first lampooned before he recalled the suited clown that he had encountered before.

From the looks of it, he was a Magician. His abilities seemed to include the ability to fire air bullets, making flaming jumps, and drawing slips of paper as weapons... Not bad... Just being able to cast spells quickly can greatly increase my battle prowess...

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein saw the scene before him change.

This time it was a splendid room, surrounded by golden statues and ornaments.

It was the same voice from before, but it reminded Rosago of the same thing.

"According to my experience, after you consume the Faceless potion, you have to remember this point—you can disguise yourself into anyone, but you are ultimately yourself.

Faceless? Sequence 6 of the Seer pathway is Faceless? This should be the Beyonder power that allowed Rosago to transform into Officer Faxine... From the looks of it, the fake Detective Zreal was also played by him...

Creeping Hunger allowed Qilangos to transform into a person with different looks. This matches this Beyonder power. From the looks of

it, some Faceless died at his hand... Such a power cannot augment a person in a straight-up battle, but it's more useful than 90% of all Beyonder powers on many occasions... It's no wonder that Rosago dared to come and attempt to kill me, and wasn't afraid of falling into a trap... This power is of great significance to me!

At this thought, Klein's eyes widened as he saw Rosago pick up a thin gold page with words written in Hermes.

"Sequence 6, Faceless:

"Main ingredients: Mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter, Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow.

"Supplementary ingredients: 80 ml of a Thousand-faced Hunter's blood, 5 drops of black Jimsonweed juice, 10 grams of Dragon Tooth Grass powder, 3 strands of hair from a Deep-sea Naga."

Thousand-faced Hunter? That seems to be a type of dragon, but not a particularly powerful kind... It shouldn't be a dragon of the spiritual system, but it's still extremely rare. It's almost extinct... Klein instantly recalled the corresponding mysticism knowledge.

At this point, the scene before him didn't change, but Rosago's attire and location did.

He wore a white wig, a dark tuxedo, and had a thick beard.

"This advancement is no longer as simple as before. The potions must be consumed in conjunction with a ritual. If you succeed, you'll obtain one of the most irresistible Beyonder powers beneath that of the High-Sequence Beyonders." The speaker's voice had changed, turning into one that sounded even older. Having expected that, Rosago asked, "What's the ritual?"

"Go to the sea, find a mermaid, and drink the potion while she's singing." The speaking old man opened an ancient book that depicted countless mysterious symbols in it.

Suddenly, a ray of light flashed from the book's surface as lines of ancient Hermes appeared in midair.

"Sequence 5, Marionettist."

When Klein saw this, he suddenly had a headache. It was a signal that his spirituality was close to being drained.

In the previous battle, just the Language of Foulness charm, alone, had consumed most of his spirituality. Later on, not only did he use three more charms from the Evernight Goddess's domain, but he had also summoned himself and responded to himself. To hold out until now showed how much progress he had made compared to before, as well as the noticeable improvement in the digestion of the Clown potion.

The scene flickered and was on the brink of shattering. Klein held on and scanned the remaining content of the formula.

"Main ingredients: Dust of ancient wraiths, core crystal of a sixwinged gargoyle.

"Supplementary ingredients: 80 ml of spring water from Sonia Island's Golden Spring, 10 grams of drago bark, remnant spirituality of ancient wraiths, 1 pair of eyes from a six-winged gargoyle.

"Advancement ritual: Consume potion in the midst of a singing mermaid's song."

Kacha. Klein stopped holding out any longer as he allowed the dream to shatter into countless illusory specks of light that disappeared.

He pinched his forehead, almost fainting. As the remnants of Rosago's spirituality and the hints of madness faded away, he was pushed back into the real world by an invisible force.

The ground, stained with blood, brains, hair, and all sorts of fragments, entered Klein's vision. He bent over and retched a little, clearing his head a little.

I'll be sent out of the mysterious space above the gray fog when I'm out of spirituality... Klein looked around and saw that Miss Bodyguard was still asleep.

He hurriedly extinguished the candle, tidied up the items related to the ritual, and then panted heavily. After a while, he finally regained some of his spirituality.

At that moment, a gust of cold wind blew at the back of his neck, causing him to shiver as his mind froze.

Klein turned his head abruptly and looked at the oriel window again. He saw that Miss Bodyguard in her black Gothic regal dress had woken up and was floating in the air.

Her pale blonde hair and pale face seemed to have diminished a little. Her entire person seemed less corporeal, to the point of her skin appearing somewhat transparent.

Klein quickly explained according to the explanation he had thought of.

"After I blew his head off, I discovered that his body was still squirming. Because I was afraid he would come back alive, I quickly used all the charms on me. I-I was very nervous and panicked at the time. It might have affected you."

This is probably the risk that the divination had revealed earlier... If she's not satisfied with the explanation and thinks that I attacked her, then I'm finished... Klein thought nervously.

His true feelings made his performance even more perfect.

Miss Bodyguard lowered her head and looked at herself, then asked with an unperturbed tone, "What charm was it at the beginning?"

"I bought a black ear at the gathering for 400 pounds. I was told that I could hear the voice of a great existence, and that if I was lucky enough, I would benefit greatly. If I was unlucky, I would die on the spot. Back then, I couldn't get a bodyguard, and since I was in such danger, I could only take the gamble. The result was pretty good," Klein replied absolutely truthfully. "When I heard the voice of the great existence, that black ear shattered by itself and turned into such a charm."

Miss Bodyguard's blue eyes swept over him slowly. The room was silent, as if it was frozen.

Finally, the lady in the black regal dress nodded.

"You'd better find a psychiatrist."

Do you mean that I've become a potential lunatic? Yes, she has guessed that it was a relic of a Listener, and she understands that Rosago's spirituality must've been tainted by the True Creator. She wouldn't suspect that I had deliberately made her sleep to take that opportunity to perform a mediumship... It would also explain why I had gotten rid of the effects of the ravings faster than she did. After all, I'm a potential lunatic created by the True Creator...

Klein smirked.

"Let's hurry up and clean up the scene. MI9 might come over to take a look." He pointed at Rosago's headless body.

As he spoke, Klein put on a pair of gloves and squatted down to look for any relics.

He quickly found more than ten pounds in cash, some essential oils and herbal powder, two crudely cut paper figurines, and a strange piece of paper.

This piece of paper was orange in color, and on it were symbols corresponding to the sun. The magic emblem formed a blank rectangle, and just by holding it in his hand, he found it very warm and sedate.

"What is this?" Klein didn't hide his puzzlement.

Without him realizing it, Miss Bodyguard was already floating behind him. She answered simply, "A mystical object

corresponding to a Notary."

"Notary?" Klein was surprised at first, but he soon remembered that Rosago was an intelligence officer in the Intis Republic. People there believed in the Eternal Blazing Sun and the God of Steam and Machinery. Similarly, the Eternal Blazing Sun was also the God of Deeds.

This is the Sequence 6 or Sequence 5 of the Bard pathway?

"If the notarization is valid, the Beyonder powers will be temporarily enhanced. If the notarization is invalid, the Beyonder powers will be forcefully dispersed." Miss Bodyguard didn't explain any further and gave a rough description of its use.

Klein was about to say something when he saw an eerie glow emitting out of Rosago's headless body and bloody brain mush. They attracted each other to form a blob that transformed into a black, pupil-less eye.

"Then, what is this?" Klein asked again, feigning ignorance.

"Something worthless." Miss Bodyguard maintained her way of speaking.

"Worthless?" Klein asked with a frown.

He actually understood what Miss Bodyguard meant. Normally, if Rosago eventually lost control, he would leave behind a strange and terrifying Sealed Artifact. If he didn't, his Beyonder characteristic could be used as the main ingredient of a Marionettist. In short, it would be of great value.

However, the problem was that he hadn't lost control but was also tainted by the True Creator. Hence, it had become a potion's main ingredient that was branded by an evil god. Using it to concoct a Marionettist potion was equivalent to committing suicide by ingesting poison.

Miss Bodyguard looked at the entirely black eye and said in a low and ethereal voice.

"It has been contaminated by an evil god. It has no value anymore."

If it really is of value, and one that's very valuable, I would even worry that you'd finish me off in passing... Klein pointed at Rosago's remains and said, "These are our common spoils of war. We'll each pick a few. You first."

Miss Bodyguard shot him a glance. Without a word, she floated over and took the "Notary Certificate."

Just like I thought... In the future, I should find and learn the knowledge in mysticism to remove an evil god's contamination... Klein took out an iron cigar case and bent down to pick up the black eye.

Chapter 252: Epilogue

As soon as Klein's fingers touched the black eye, he heard illusory sounds as a throbbing pain seared through his head.

But, at the same time, something strange appeared in his vision.

These were countless illusory black threads that spread out from Miss Bodyguard and his own body. They emanated from their bodies, out into the void towards some boundless distance.

This was a scene that would horrify people with trypophobia.

Klein suddenly gritted his teeth, unable to endure the corruptive feeling any longer as he placed the black eye into the iron cigar case.

Everything restored to normal, and the negative side effects he suffered subsided.

Only then did Klein have the energy to make guesses.

Is that the essence of a Marionettist's Beyonder powers?

It allows one to see and control certain threads connecting every person's body and spirit?

What a pity that it's contaminated. The side effects are too great, and it cannot be used as a mystical item...

For now, disregarding an attempt to purify it above the gray fog, this will be considered the second time that I'm provoking the True Creator, so it is very likely that "He" would prepare "Himself" and seek me out... If that happened, I probably wouldn't have a chance of reviving again... I should learn and master the relevant knowledge before making a decision...

Phew. He exhaled, and after Miss Bodyguard chose the crude paper figurines and the corresponding materials, he bent down again to pick up the 13 pounds 5 soli and 8 pence.

Then, looking at Rosago's headless body and the blood all over the floor, he said, with a slight headache, "Let's clean up the scene."

The pale blonde Miss Bodyguard floated to the side and calmly said, "Let me do it."

You? Klein stopped, puzzled and shocked, before turning his head.

Miss Bodyguard floated to Rosago's side, crouched down, and went to lie down over the body.

She slowly sank in and fused with the corpse!

The fingers of Rosago's body twitched twice, and the blood, brain matter, and fragments around it flowed backward, forming a new head at the neck.

However, the head was covered with countless cracks, just like a disgusting toy made from tiny fragments.

It was like glass that had been shattered but didn't crumble immediately. There was still blood and brain matter flowing inside it, as well as the reflection of the bullet from the revolver.

Klein couldn't help but take a step back, feeling that this was definitely one of the most terrifying forms in any ghost story.

Rosago's corpse climbed to its feet, picked up the police cap, and half covered its face. The murder scene had been cleaned, leaving zero traces.

Incomparable professionalism! Klein marveled in his heart.

He watched as Miss Bodyguard steered the corpse to lumber to the door. He subconsciously warned her, "Don't take a carriage or walk in brightly-lit places."

It would frighten the carriage driver and other passers-by!

Miss Bodyguard didn't stop, completely ignoring his words.

Suddenly, Klein thought of something. He realized what he had overlooked as he quickly added, "On the way back, go to the Rice police station, Sergeant Faxine's home, or search around Minsk Street for the clothes Rosago was originally wearing."

Rosago came wearing a police uniform, and the powers of a Faceless were obviously limited to himself, so where were his previous clothes? He couldn't have been wearing a police uniform all night! If MI9 and the police found Rosago's clothes nearby and realized that I'm not

hurt, things would be a little tricky... Miss Bodyguard is an expert that's not considered a legal Beyonder. For a normal detective to pay 1000 pounds to hire a bodyguard is enough to arouse suspicion... Klein kept thinking, trying to seal all the loopholes ahead of time.

Just as he was about to use his divination ability to help Miss Bodyguard find Rosago's old clothes and return the missing uniform, Rosago's corpse paused and replied in a rusty voice, "I know."

Eh, she seems very confident... Oh right, Miss Bodyguard's state is between the physical body and the spirit body, and the principle behind divination is to travel the spirit world with an Astral Projection... Thus, she can rely on her instincts to divine... Having realized this, Klein didn't say another word. He handed the cartridge case to Rosago's corpse and watched it open the door, walk out, and close the door politely.

The spoil of war that I chose is a Beyonder characteristic contaminated by the True Creator. I believe that no one would be able to divine it. Even if they did, they would feel the danger ahead of time and wouldn't dare to proceed with the divination... While thinking over the matter, Klein walked back to the sofa and sat down, feeling a lingering sense of fear.

The battle had lasted no more than a minute, nor had it been fierce enough to destroy anything, but the ferocity and danger of it had been second only to what he had experienced when facing Megose and the baby in her womb.

Even with the powerful Miss Bodyguard and the Language of Foulness, he had almost fallen under Rosago's control and killed without being able to put up a resistance.

The ability of a Marionettist is very odd and very powerful! According to the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Rosago should include all of the main ingredients of the potions Sequences 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. If it wasn't contaminated by an evil god, if it was matched with the supplementary ingredients, an ordinary person could instantly become a Sequence 5 Beyonder. Of course, this kind of advancement method—one

depending entirely on luck—has long been abandoned by history. It's the most primitive and most dangerous method...

Advancing step by step according to the Sequence is the best way that has been verified by the lives of countless predecessors... If I can get rid of the corruption of the True Creator in the future, then I can also use the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Rosago when advancing from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5. The additional characteristics will only make me stronger, like the Captain...

As Klein recalled the past, he raised his hand to pinch his forehead. He turned to think about something more important.

Rosago's appearance meant that the struggle for the manuscript had ended... Could his lack of charms have to do with him finishing all his charms in the battle? To come at such a critical juncture, it's likely he had the intention of diverting attention... Heh, MI9 probably didn't expect him to seek revenge so boldly under such circumstances. They didn't send anyone to monitor me and could only passively wait for Rosago to give them the "signal"...

Rosago was Bakerland's assistant, and his actions should be directed only by Bakerland. After his death, as long as Bakerland is dead, there would be no more latent dangers left... I wonder if the assassination has begun or if it succeeded...

Hmm... Tonight, because of the battle over Helmosuin's manuscript, the powers defending Bakerland would be at its weakest. If it were me, I'd definitely not miss this opportunity. I'm sure Bakerland didn't think that someone would assassinate him!

With nothing to do, Klein fished out a coin and, with recited with a suppressed tone, "Bakerland is already dead."

...

Ding!

The penny tumbled in the air and fell down into the palm of Klein's hand, head facing up.

It meant a positive result!

Bakerland is dead? The assassination was a success? Klein was overjoyed, his tensed up nerves immediately relaxed.

Without Rosago's interference, he believed that the result was correct!

This matter has finally ended... Klein took a deep breath and slowly exhaled.

He leaned back slowly on the sofa and looked out of the window at the faint crimson moon amid his fatigue and relief.

...

Inside the Intis Republic's embassy, two military officials were squatting beside Bakerland's body, examining the cause of his death.

Their partners and their superior had already gone out, chasing in a bid to capture the assassin. However, everyone knew that it was already too late. There was no hope left.

"There's severe lung damage, suspected to be the result of a disease... An extremely strong fatal blow, one much stronger than all the Sequence 5 Beyonder attacks I've ever seen..." one of the military officials said in a low voice.

"Disease? On the floor and on the bed, there are obvious marks of flesh and blood magic on the ground and on the bed, but none on the wall. Besides, the commotion of the fight wasn't transmitted outside. Finally, with the lethal blow having the characteristics of corruption and obliteration, there are at least four unconnected Beyonder powers..." Another military official stood up and began to describe the situation as if he was talking to himself.

He suddenly stopped and looked at the other military official. They said in unison, "Shepherd!"

After a few seconds of silence, the squatting military official frowned and said, "It might be a group with at least four different Beyonders..."

"Then, we'll wait to be judged! It's normal for us not to discover the infiltration of a single Rose Bishop, but how did the other three do it? It's impossible!" The standing military official denied the guess as he hesitantly said, "However, I have heard of another Sequence that can

create similar effects. I-I think it's called Scribe. I don't know what pathway it is, nor do I know which organization it belongs."

The squatting military official nodded and said, "A Shepherd is the prime suspect. The Aurora Order are a bunch of lunatics. It's nothing odd for them to do anything! Let's begin investigating the identity of the woman that seduced the ambassador. Damn it. The Loen Kingdom definitely won't permit our investigations!"

"Those Aurora Order bastards are lunatics who deserve to be f*cked by donkeys!" The standing military official shook his head in frustration.

They were bound to be punished for the ambassador's assassination.

...

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein pretended as though nothing had happened. Putting up with his fatigue, he flipped through the papers.

After about twenty minutes, he suddenly saw Miss Bodyguard, in her black regal dress and long, pale blonde hair, appear in the oriel window.

"Is it done?" Klein subconsciously asked.

Miss Bodyguard nodded slightly without a word.

Phew... Klein thought for a moment before saying, "Thank you for your protection. This matter ends here.

"I'll pay you the remaining 900 pounds in two days. As you know, there's a withdrawal limit.

"Or should I hand it over to Maric?"

The pale-faced lady opened and closed her mouth, her voice seemingly ethereal as it echoed in the air.

"Just give it to me.

"I promised to protect you for three days, not just once."

Lady, you really abide by the contract... However, this would be very inconvenient for me... Are you going with me to catch the adulterers in

bed tomorrow? Three days. Today is Thursday, and the protection would be over by Sunday afternoon. Yes, thankfully, it wouldn't affect the Tarot Gathering... Klein rubbed his forehead and said, "Alright. How should I address you?"

"You don't need to know." Miss Bodyguard lifted her gothic regal dress, bowed slightly, and disappeared from the oriel window.

She really has... quite the character! Klein smiled in response to Miss Bodyguard's reply—a very obvious smile.

Yes, to be able to fend off Rosago, a Marionettist, for a short period of time to the extent of having a seesaw battle; she's most likely a Sequence 5 Beyonder. I wonder what Sequence pathway she belongs to and what her potion name is. Her state is rather unique... If it weren't for her, I wouldn't have even had the chance to use the Language of Foulness... Klein picked up the newspaper beside him and pretended to read, but he was actually thinking.

However, he quickly turned his attention back to the issue of whether there were still loopholes on the matter. For example, the contaminated Beyonder characteristic left behind by Rosago had an intense luster of spirituality. It was very likely that it couldn't be concealed by the iron cigar case alone, so it would be exposed under the prying eyes of others using Spirit Vision.

Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision and looked down at his pocket. He could see faint colorful lusters emanating from within the iron cigar case, but it wasn't obvious and was rather thin.

This was mixed with the color of his own aura, making it difficult to distinguish or detect it.

That's right. Only a High-Sequence Beyonder can identify it through two levels of interference... No wonder all kinds of materials like herbal powders and the corresponding essential oil extracts are kept in metal bottles and not wooden vessels. It's because they contain spirituality, and those with better Spirit Vision can see through wood and see the color of the auras... Klein suddenly understood some of the important details in mysticism.

In the past, he did things according to the rules without considering the reasons behind them, but now, he understood the underlying reason behind the rules.

After repeatedly checking and ensuring that everything was in order, Klein put down the newspapers and walked to the second floor.

He had originally planned to take off his clothes and take a bath to completely relax himself, but when he thought of how Miss Bodyguard could appear out of nowhere in his house, he felt a little uneasy. Therefore, he only washed his face, brushed his teeth, and soaked his feet in hot water.

Returning to his bedroom and taking off his coat, Klein hid his belongings before he collapsed onto the bed. As he was exhausted and had held on for quite a while, he ended up with tense nerves that prevented him from quickly falling asleep.

Opening his eyes to look at the crimson moonlight on the ceiling, Klein didn't attempt to sleep with the help of Cogitation. Instead, he aimlessly unfurled his thoughts, as if he were riding a horse without pulling at the reins.

As his thoughts wandered, he quickly noticed a problem having encountered too many coincidences in Tingen City and later learning how it was related to Sealed Artifact 0-08.

My second case after arriving at Backlund allowed me to get the next three potions formulas. Is that too much of a coincidence?

Although this is in line with the revelation from my divination — "Backlund contains the opportunities for me to become powerful." Isn't it too fast and simple?

Simple doesn't refer to the difficulty, but rather to the degree of twists and turns in the matter. This matter was very difficult and dangerous, but it wasn't complex and appeared simple.

According to my expectations, I would've gathered information regarding the Secret Order through Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and Miss Xio and her companion, and then I would catch the tail of this ancient organization. After numerous twists and turns, I would eventually obtain the formulas and that would have taken at least three months. Who knew that I would've succeeded in less than three weeks...

It can't be that it was arranged by someone again, right?

Yes... Let me think through the circumstances again. It's no coincidence that the Intis Republic is related to the Secret Order. Emperor Roselle's diary has confirmed this circumstantially.

The abilities of the Seer and Faceless are very suited for an intelligence organization. For a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of a similar pathway to become the assistant of an intelligence tsar like Bakerland is reasonable and normal. That's not a coincidence.

The reason that the ambassador sent someone to take revenge on me likely has to do with him wanting to divert attention. Then, sending Rosago, who can most easily succeed and escape, is a choice with reduced risk. That's not surprising at all.

It was quite normal for Ian to look for new detectives in the papers after none of the detectives he knew were willing to accept his mission of tracking down Zreal. There weren't many new detectives advertising on the papers at the time, and I was probably the only one. Well, I was the only one on the Backlund Bulletin...

Just like what I've concluded previously, the problem with Meursault was that he was too rash, and I was worried that it's not easy to disguise myself usually as it can end up attracting more attention. Therefore, I didn't try to disguise myself. Although these two possibilities, especially the former, has the probability of being influenced, it does match the corresponding person's personality, mentality, and origins.

And this isn't the main point. This doesn't explain the problem of how my second case ended up involving a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Seer pathway.

It was destined by fate? That doesn't feel right.

Thinking ahead, after I transmigrated, the first and second case I found myself embroiled in was related to the Seer pathway. Of course, it could be explained as an arrangement by 0-08.

Right, the Antigonus family's notebook even corrupted the Misfortune Cloth Puppet and showed me the complicated vertical eye symbol that involves the Antigonus family's treasure. The reason I came up with

back then was that with the termination of the Antigonus family's bloodline, it viewed me, a Seer who had survived despite having interacted with it, as its inheritor.

Now that I think about it, this reason is extremely trifling. What if I'm a devout believer of the Evernight Goddess? However, I only made a guess at that time and didn't confirm it.

The Antigonus family's treasure is obviously related to the Seer pathway.

Thinking deeper, why did I transmigrate? Why did I happen to possess Klein's body, and not anyone else... Back then, Klein had just proceeded with dark divination and was made to commit suicide by the Antigonus family's notebook. And that notebook is clearly related to the Seer pathway.

In addition, the first time I saw Roselle's diary, it had content that involved his regret of not choosing Apprentice, Marauder, or Seer. That was very coincidental.

From beginning to end, except for those parts involving 0-08, everything appeared to be in a mess. It doesn't seem like a conscious arrangement, but more like a kind of passive attraction, a mutual attraction, an attraction that has breaks between them.

I attract things and items regarding the Seer pathway, and at the same time, I'm attracted to them?

It does seem odd thinking about it. This kind of attraction even directly influences fate, preventing even Mr. Azik from seeing through it?

Is there some strange characteristic to me?

And this characteristic allows me to resurrect a limited number of times?

With this in mind, Klein suddenly had the impulse to go above the gray fog to perform a divination and confirm his ideas.

But he quickly rejected this idea, not only because Miss Bodyguard might be watching in the mirror, but also because he believed that his greatest characteristic was the mysterious space above the gray fog!

Therefore, it was obviously impossible for him to have an answer if he were to use it to divine about it.

At least for now, there aren't any obvious signs of manipulation. It would be acceptable if it's just pure attraction... And I've already chosen a Beyonder pathway, that cannot be changed until Sequence 4, so I can only take things one step at a time... Right, I should be firm about not heading to the Hornacis mountain range to seek out the Antigonus family's treasure... Heh heh, I have a feeling that I would say how nice it is in the future when I actually do it... Klein silently made a self-deprecating remark as he felt his exhaustion gradually wash over him. His eyelids couldn't help but close.

The last thought before he fell asleep was:

I should participate in more Beyonder gatherings and gather the corresponding Beyonder ingredients for Magician through Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and The Sun. I wouldn't reject anything for Faceless if they were available. In addition, I should obtain mystical items that have less severe negative effects. Before my digestion and increase in strength, it's best to have more lifepreservation abilities... Apart from this, investing, taking on jobs, saving up money, and attempts to look for Lanevus to use him as the starting point for my revenge, can also be considered a form of practice...

Those were Klein's future plans.

At seven in the morning, he woke up as usual. It was still gloomy and hazy outside.

Klein got up and walked to the door. As he passed by the fulllength mirror, he saw that Miss Bodyguard had suddenly appeared.

She wore the same black bonnet, her face was as pale as ever. Her voice pierced through the glass and slipped into Klein's ear in an ethereal fashion.

"Someone from MI9 came last night."

Eh... I should say as expected, the "police" came late, but I still have to thank them for being late... Klein smiled and asked, "They didn't find anything, right?"

In regards to the answer, he was very certain that if MI9 had discovered something, he wouldn't have been able to sleep undisturbed.

"No." Miss Bodyguard's figure faded and disappeared into the mirror.

This ability of hers is very powerful... Even Spirit Vision can't detect her... Perhaps, she can be seen with Rosago's Beyonder characteristic? Find Miss Bodyguard through those hidden threads? Klein's mind stirred as he returned to the bed and took out the iron cigar case from under his pillow.

Just as he touched it, before he could even open it, a bonepiercing cold rushed at his neck. He felt his hairs stand on end, and his entire body trembled.

Pow!

His hand loosened and the iron cigar case fell to the ground.

This is a warning from Miss Bodyguard... Klein laughed dryly, pretending as though nothing had happened as he stuffed the iron cigar case into his pocket.

After washing up and putting on his clothes, he arrived at the first floor and took out the newspapers that he had subscribed to from his letterbox.

Flipping open the Tussock Times, Klein saw the headline:

"Intis Ambassador to Backlund murdered! Terrorist organization, the Aurora Order, claims responsibility!"

The result is out so quickly? Besides, the Aurora Order had only accepted a job, so why would they claim responsibility? Yes... A terrorist organization needs to show off their stature and build up their image. Only then would they be able to attract enough fresh blood. This complements their secret preachings... Mr. A is very good. He should be a Shepherd. Klein stood in the hallway, reading the news.

According to the news, there was evidence of the Aurora Order's assault on Ambassador Bakerland. In the follow-up investigation, they found a letter deliberately left behind by the Aurora Order which claimed responsibility for it.

At the end of the news, the reporter briefly introduced the Aurora Order and listed some of the illegal crimes that they had committed. Their fame instantly surpassed most of the secret organizations.

Regardless, this matter had come to an end... Klein exhaled, turned his head to look out the window, and he saw a thin mist filling the air as a drizzle began pattering down.

Shouldn't there be bright sunshine and sunny weather during such moments? Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh.

And now, he had to go out to catch some adulterers.

Chapter 254: Various Parties

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey, with a white napkin covering her, watched as the dining maidservant cut her a piece of bacon, laid out two fully-fried eggs, spread fruit jam on a piece of soft bread, and added sauce to some grilled mushrooms.

In a true noble family, maidservants were divided into many categories. Apart from personal maids, there were maids for the different bedrooms, study room maids, activity room maids, guest room maids, dressing maids, shoe maids, jewelry maids, dining maids, laundry maids, and kitchen maids. They were strictly assigned to their own tasks, with one task handled by one maid.

Although this was a great waste of manpower, for nobles, propriety was everything. Unless there was a large amount of debt, they would never reduce their requirements in such matters.

Audrey took a sip of the brownish-red tea, allowing the faint scent of malt and rose slush in her mouth.

At this moment, she heard her father, a Member of Parliament of the House of Lords, the powerful banker, Earl Hall, mumbling as he held a newspaper in his hands.

“The Aurora Order is really crazy.”

Aurora Order? Audrey blinked and asked curiously, “What did they do?”

“Oh, baby, you don’t want to know. They assassinated the Intis Ambassador, Bakerland. It does them no good.” Earl Hall shook his head as he flipped through the newspaper.

Audrey’s elder brother, the count’s eldest son, Hibbert Hall swallowed the grilled mushrooms in his mouth and expressed his opinion.

“Perhaps they want to destroy the relationship between the kingdom and Intis and let the war spread from the colonies to the Northern Continent.”

This child of noble birth had a handsome face and bright golden hair. He looked like a classical sculpture, regardless of which angle one viewed him from.

"No, if that was the case, then they wouldn't leave behind so much obvious evidence. Moreover, recently, the kingdom has too many new policies that will be implemented and will need some time to stabilize the environment, so we won't rashly start a war. What happened last night was already reported in the newspaper this morning, and the details of the events and the murderer are enough to explain the thoughts of His Majesty and the ministers." Earl Hall directed his son.

Audrey listened to her father and brother discuss the matter in a daze before realizing what had happened.

Bakerland has been assassinated?

Mr. A succeeded?

He really is from the Aurora Order?

The reason why he intentionally exposed that it was the Aurora Order who did it was to prove that he was the one who completed the task and that he hadn't cheated me out of my money?

This is too fast and efficient. I only paid the first sum yesterday afternoon, and I'm hearing the result this morning. A good result!

Audrey was astonished and delighted. It was an uncontrollable joy, but also an instinctive fear.

It was definitely something to be happy about since the mission entrusted by Mr. Fool's Blessed had been accomplished so easily. However, the power and actions displayed by Mr. A and the Aurora Order who was backing him left Audrey subconsciously scared.

Thankfully, I talked with Glaint yesterday and reached a loan agreement. As a viscount, he should've successfully raised the money without drawing attention to himself... I'll give Mr. A the remaining funds in the coming two days through Xio and Fors. I can't afford to show my face... I won't be attending Mr. A's gathering for the next month or two. It's good that I already have other circles... Audrey took a reserved bite of the soft bread which was slathered with jam.

As breakfast drew to a close, small cakes of cream, cherries, and strawberries were served to her plate, and she suddenly felt a little smug as she calmed down.

Mr. Hanged Man wanted to take part in the mission, but he might've only just now completed his initial assignment... but it's already over. Serves him right to be at sea~ Audrey was in a good mood, and she was smiling as she savored the dessert.

...

At Hillston Borough, Xio and Fors looked at the newspaper in front of them and made no further movements for a long time.

"...This was done by Mr. A, wasn't it?" Xio looked at her friend with a shocked and puzzled look.

Fors turned the stone bracelet on her wrist and shook her head in a daze.

"Perhaps."

"I know about the Aurora Order, but I don't know if Mr. A is a member of the Aurora Order."

"He should be. After all, we only gave him 2,000 pounds yesterday. I doubt anyone else would also want to assassinate Ambassador Bakerland..." Xio said with uncertainty.

Fors was silent for a few seconds before she suddenly sighed and said, "Whether it was Mr. A or not, we still have to give him the remaining 8000 pounds. At the moment, no one can prove that he didn't do it. If we want to stay in this circle, we can't renege on the debt!"

"Anyway, we're not the ones paying... And we'll still get 500 pounds for the work!" With that, Xio became happy.

"The thing is, I always have a feeling that finding Mr. A again would be dangerous..." Fors pondered and said, "I'll go by myself to make the last payment. It'll be better for the both of us." "But..." Xio was a little worried.

"If you follow me, it'll affect my escape," Fors shook the bracelet on her wrist and said in a disdainful tone.

“Alright then,” Xio scratched her short, rough blond hair as she helplessly replied.

While the two of them were fretting about this, a new message from Mr. A came to them from a private communication channel. He told them not to look for him, but to deposit the rest of the money in separate anonymous accounts at different banks.

Phew... Xio and Fors breathed a sigh of relief in unison.

...

In a basement that was as wide as a temple, Mr. A, wearing a hooded black robe, was kneeling in the darkness, murmuring something reverently.

In front of him was a three-meter statue of a man hanging upside down with his legs chained up.

This hanged man had a giant’s unique single vertical eye, and his arms were stretched out horizontally, forming a cross.

At this moment, a man with a black robe came in and humbly reported, “Mr. A, I’ve already sent the news.”

“Well done,” Mr. A said, without turning his head.

The man in the black robe asked curiously, “Why don’t you let us investigate who commissioned this mission?”

Mr. A lowered his head and said with an indifferent tone, “There’s no need.

“You must remember that this is a critical moment.

“We will cause chaos throughout the continent, try our best to attract the attention of others, and use these to welcome the return of our Lord!

“Hahaha. Cough! Cough! Cough...”

Mr. A suddenly laughed before he started having a fit of coughing. It was so serious that he fell to the ground.

“Cough! Cough!”

He coughed out blood-colored fragments which continued squirming after falling to the ground as if they were alive.

The man in the black robe immediately lowered his head, pretending as though he had seen nothing.

After quite some time, Mr. A finally calmed down.

He crawled forward, his mouth pressed against the ground as he licked all the blood-colored fragments that he had coughed out back into his mouth.

...

126 New Year's Street, Hillston Borough.

The relaxed Klein didn't tail Doragu Gale this time. Instead, he chose his mistress, Erica Taylor. After all, adultery needed two to clap.

The pretty blonde, with the intricate makeup, arrived early at the Quelaag Club via a rental carriage. Klein, who carried a suitcase containing a portable camera and all sorts of disguises, followed her in.

"Are there any more rooms to rest in?" Wearing the club's Frost badge on his chest, he asked the elegant maid responsible for receiving guests today.

The maid wearing a black-and-white dress politely smiled.

"Yes, please follow the attendant upstairs."

Klein nodded slightly. He followed the red-vested attendant up the stairs and arrived at the second floor, just in time to see Erica Taylor enter a lounge that faced the streets.

"Do you want to see the passers-by on the street or the tennis court out back?" The red-vested attendant asked politely.

"Let's do the street," Klein answered casually in a deliberate manner.

Under the arrangements of the red-vested attendant, he and Erica Taylor's room was separated by two rooms, and he could also see the street outside the club.

How do I take a picture later? Should I find a chance to sneak in and hide in the room, or climb out of the window and travel across the pipes? Neither of these methods can conceal that exaggerated flash, but the latter can be disguised as a vogue shot from the outside. That wouldn't bring suspicion to me and I wouldn't be kicked out... However, this will be easily noticed by Doragu and Erica... Use a charm to put them to sleep? No, it wouldn't be convincing enough; it has to be a picture of them doing the deed...

There's only one chance, and I have to take it well enough... This isn't my field of expertise, as I'm not some artistic master. If it was Old Neil, he would definitely attempt to conjure a new ritualistic magic to hide the camera flash. Of course, the Goddess might not respond to his request...

As Klein considered his next move, he saw the image of Miss Bodyguard appear in a silver mirror in the room.

She was still wearing her black Gothic regal dress and her matching soft hat. Her hair was pale blonde in color with delicate features across her pale face.

"Do you have any way of hiding the flash of the camera?" Klein asked casually.

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw ripples on the surface of the silver mirror as a slightly transparent palm suddenly extended.

Miss Bodyguard came out of the silver mirror like a ghost, walked in front of Klein, and said with a nod, "Yes."

She lowered her body and leaned over, slowly fusing into the camera's lens!

Klein's mouth slightly opened as he watched this horrifying scene, taking quite a while to recover from his shock. He picked up his portable camera and tried a test shot in his lounge.

The effect was beyond his expectations. The flash was limited to the vicinity of the camera, and the resulting image was also quite good.

Perhaps it should now be called a Spectral Camera... Klein lampooned. He took the camera, went to the window, and patiently waited.

Not long after, he saw Doragu Gale arrive via carriage.

In the other room, Erica Taylor saw her lover and hastily left the lounge to meet him on the first floor.

Klein seized the opportunity to use a tarot card to open her room, carefully hiding in the cupboard where the extra sheets and quilts were kept.

The darkness around him reminded him of the previous night, of that creepy and terrifying Numblewright Master, Rosago.

Last night was filled with danger, yet today, here I am catching adulterers in the act. Life sure is marvelous... While Klein was making fun of himself, he heard the door open.

Huddled in the cupboard, Klein secretly activated his Spirit Vision and saw two interfering auras enter.

"Erica, I brought you a present," A deep voice sounded as the door closed.

As expected, he's a gentleman of the Loen Kingdom. Even in an affair, he seems a little old-fashioned. If it was a man from Intis, he would definitely be shouting "sweetheart," "baby," "angel," and the like... Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

Of course, this was based on the stereotypes from newspapers, magazines, and novels.

Erica Taylor asked in surprise, "Let me guess... Is it Fassman Eye Cream, Face Cream, or Essence? Or Leshini's?"

What the heck are all those... Klein was stunned by what he heard.

It was clear that Doragu Gale wasn't able to react in time either. It took him about eight seconds before he said, "...No, stockings."

In this world, since oil hasn't been discovered, there were no corresponding cheap chemical products; therefore, silk stockings were considered high-class items.

"Not bad, let me take a look." Erica's joy didn't diminish.

"I bought them yesterday at Phillip's. One pair for thirty soli, a total of five pairs," Doragu said in a flaunting tone.

"How expensive." *That's expensive!*

Erica and Klein both said the same thing, one exclaiming, the other secretly sighing.

Benson has worked for so many years, earning only 1 pound 10 soli a week, which is 30 soli. That's just equivalent to a pair of stockings, and with that salary, he was able to provide his brother and sister with an education, feed them fairly well, and even provided them with a place

to sleep... An average worker with a bit of skill would only be paid around 20 soli a week... Klein's clicked his tongue.

"No, it's not expensive. Silk stockings are worth that much. I even gave an extra tip of five soli." As he spoke, the color of his aura turned more vivid, and Klein guessed that he had taken off his coat.

"Then I'll give it a try," Erica Taylor softly said in a suggestive manner.

I feel like I'm watching a porno again... And it's even a live broadcast... Besides, Miss Bodyguard is also here... The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he watched red colors flowing across red colors, signifying the passion between the two was igniting like fire.

The purple color is almost red and isn't stopping... Red wrapped around green, orange... While listening to the wheezing and the low laughter, Klein judged the movements and positions of the couple outside by the change in the color of their auras.

Feeling that this was enough, Klein silently pushed open the cupboard door and looked in the direction of the bed.

Doragu and Erica were already entangled, their clothes half undone, their movements intense.

Klein lifted the Spectral Camera and aimed it at the passionate couple, waiting to see their faces at the same time.

As Doragu and Erica fell back onto the bed, Klein finally captured the most appropriate frame and pressed the shutter button.

The click of the camera wasn't distinct, and the intense flash and other abnormalities were limited to a very small area, so the couple wasn't alarmed.

With no confidence in his photography skills, Klein added a few more shots, intending to have options to choose from later.

He was only planning on handing his employer a single picture because too many photos would make the lawyer suspect why the couple didn't notice him taking the picture.

A piece of underwear landed lightly on the floor, and the sound of breathing intensified as Klein grabbed his portable camera and adeptly rolled out of the cupboard, closing the door behind him.

He rolled on the floor until he reached the lounge's door. Then, he quietly pulled it open and returned to the corridor.

Done! With a sigh of relief, Klein politely closed the door in silence, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed in the direction of the bed.

Without further ado, he returned to his lounge.

The last 7 pounds will soon be obtained... And I also earned an additional Quelaag Club membership worth 50 pounds. It covers board, lodging, and entertainment... That's worth even more than 50 pounds. Without any connections or contacts, I wouldn't have been able to join this—even with a hundred pounds... This mission isn't bad at all. It's simple, safe, and profitable... Klein put down his portable camera and sighed with emotion in his heart.

At that moment, a hand suddenly stretched out from the camera lens.

Miss Bodyguard in her black regal dress slowly came out and floated in midair again, but her face remained pale.

Thinking of how he had led her to watch some porno, Klein tried to change the topic, in embarrassment.

"I plan on heading to the cafeteria to eat something. Do you want to come with me?"

Each member could bring one guest.

As for how to explain the sudden appearance of the guest, Klein's plan was to go out for a while and then come back.

Miss Bodyguard replied in a neutral tone, "I can go without eating for two weeks."

As she spoke, she turned her back to Klein and floated toward the mirror, disappearing in an instant.

What exactly is her Sequence... Klein thought curiously, putting the portable camera back in its case.

After doing all of this, he went to the bathroom and relieved himself.

After washing his hands and wiping his face, Klein looked into the mirror and examined his appearance.

As he hadn't shaved this morning, he had quite a stubble. His hair was parted to the sides in a three-to-seven ratio, and a pair of gold-rimmed glasses hung on his face. He looked refined and scholarly, with a tinge of maturity.

There's a definite difference from the past. I can still be recognized if scrutinized. Once my beard grows to a certain extent, I wouldn't have to worry that much... I wouldn't need to be afraid of anything when I advance to Sequence 6 Faceless... Klein took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, and walked out of the bathroom. He took his suitcase and went to the cafeteria on the first floor.

It was just after nine, so breakfast was still served. Klein chose a double-sided, half-cooked fried egg, a loaf of white bread, a cake of butter, a Desi pie, a serving of bacon, and a cup of Marquis Black Tea with a piece of lemon floating on its surface.

While looking for a seat, he suddenly saw a familiar face. It was the surgeon who had recommended him to the club, Aaron Ceres.

The tall, thin gentleman was sitting alone in the corner, having finished his breakfast and was sipping his coffee as he leafed through the newspaper.

"Good morning, Dr. Ceres." Klein walked over and greeted the slightly cold Aaron.

The surgeon nudged the frame over his nose and said, "Just call me Aaron, Detective Moriarty."

"According to the principle of reciprocity, you have to call me Sherlock." Klein sat down. "Any news today? I came out in such a hurry that I haven't read the newspapers."

"The Intis ambassador was assassinated. A terrorist organization by the name of the Aurora Order declared responsibility for it. Sigh, this world is becoming more and more chaotic. Sooner or later, there will

be an all-out war in the Southern and Northern Continent," Aaron expressed his feelings.

"The war has never stopped, Sir; it's just that we've been able to enjoy peace," Klein finished his fried egg and replied with a smile. "What a pity that such an important case wouldn't seek the help of private detectives like us."

Aaron flipped through the newspaper.

"This news doesn't have much to do with us. What's really important is that the House of Lords and the House of Commons will pass a motion either today or tomorrow after a long debate. First, it's the Civil Servant Unified Examination Bill, as well as the relevant guidance and actual plans. Second, is the establishment of the Atmospheric Pollution Council; and third, the establishment of the independent alkaline industry inspector. The latter two involve pollution. God, they're finally paying attention to this problem. The patients in the hospital with pulmonary attacks have been rising constantly.

Has it finally been passed? I wonder how Benson's preparations are... Will it be affected by my death... Klein's smile suddenly beamed.

"That's good news."

"To Mary, this is extremely good news. She wishes to make herself or her husband, Doragu, become one of the members of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. She has a higher chance since she doesn't hold any positions in a commercial company and is a devotee of the Goddess. Besides, in any organization, there's ultimately a need for balance." Aaron mentioned Klein's employer. "I suggested to her that she should frequent the club since we have quite a number of House of Commons Members of Parliament as club members."

In the Loen Kingdom, the Members of Parliament of the House of Commons were mainly composed of wealthy people and the representatives of certain nobles. However, there were also many professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, priests, teachers, scientists, and accountants.

The Quelaag Club targeted a variety of professionals in the middle class, without distinguishing between them by their political inclinations.

Klein didn't know much about such things, so he just said a few words in response before changing the subject.

"Aaron, it's Friday today. Don't you need to head back to the hospital?"

"No, I'm on leave. It's been terrible lately." Aaron suddenly frowned.

"What happened?" Klein drank a mouthful of black tea.

Since Bakerland had just been assassinated, and Rosago's body had been thrown into a sewer far away, he didn't know when it would be found. Klein was concerned about the aftereffects and the imperfection of his disguise, so he didn't plan on taking missions that were too difficult or easily exposed his identity; therefore, he was interested in simple matters which held potential and handsome rewards.

Aaron put down the newspaper and sighed.

"I've been very unlucky recently. I've had a few consecutive failed surgeries. Fortunately, there were no serious consequences. Otherwise, my license would've been revoked."

Although it wasn't big news for surgeons to cause deaths in the present era since it was common, the penalties were still quite severe if a serious accident occurred due to a surgeon's negligence.

Well, I can't help much... Well, actually, I know of a luck enhancement ritual, but its effect is to send you above a gray fog...

Klein lowered his head and began to nibble at his bread.

After breakfast, he said goodbye to Aaron, went to withdraw 500 pounds in cash, and gave 300 pounds to Miss Bodyguard before returning home. While waiting for the photos to develop, he hoped for a simple job to be entrusted to him. Unfortunately, none of them came to him.

In the evening, Klein prepared to head out again, his target—Bravehearts Bar.

Taking the opportunity of having Miss Bodyguard around, he hoped to get in touch with more Beyonder circles.

Before leaving the house, Klein tossed a coin to inquire if it was unbeneficial for him to visit the Bravehearts Bar that day.

After receiving a negative result, he looked around before whispering into the air, "Is someone monitoring me today?"

After a few seconds of silence, Miss Bodyguard's ethereal voice suddenly sounded from behind him.

"No."

Klein subconsciously looked back, but he failed to find Miss Bodyguard.

His attention quickly returned to the answer he received as he couldn't help but let out a snicker in his heart.

MI9 isn't even putting me on their suspect list at all!

After confirming that Rosago hadn't sought me out, they completely put me aside.

Should I feel honored or insulted?

It's true that a detective that busies himself looking for cats has no way of being associated with the assassination of an ambassador or getting rid of a Sequence 5 expert...

Furthermore, MI9 has been monitoring me for quite some time. My panic, my helplessness, and my struggle for self-preservation were laid out for them to see. It's obvious that I can't inflict any substantial harm to the ambassador...

With that in mind, Klein put on his half top hat, carried his black silver-inlaid cane, and walked out of 15 Minsk Street. He spent 2 soli for a rental carriage that brought him to Bravehearts Bar on Iron Gate Street in the Backlund Bridge area.

He entered like a regular, walked past the cheering drunkards around the boxing ring, and rapped the countertop when he came to the bar counter.

"One glass of Southville beer."

The bartender looked up at him and mumbled, “Kaspars is in Card Room 3.”

Klein smiled and pushed five one-penny copper coins to the man.

Then, carrying the wooden cup and sipping a white, smooth, frothy Southville beer, he walked around two of the rowdiest, liveliest stages that stank the most and knocked on the door of Card Room 3.

Kaspars was playing Texas poker with unlimited stakes. Stacks of cash were piled high in front of him, as well as yellow coins that piled up in a dazzling heap.

Noticing Klein’s gaze, the black-market arms dealer with the huge scar on his face twitched his big red nose and casually said, “I don’t like using chips as they don’t feel real to me. It’s still the texture of cash and the weight of the coins that leaves me intoxicated. It the same as f**king women!”

After finishing that sentence, Kaspars frowned slightly.

“What are you doing here again?”

Klein didn’t answer directly, but he gestured with his mouth to speak outside.

“Damn it! I was going to clean them up with this hand! Bullshit, I’m folding!” Kaspars tossed the two cards in front of him into the middle of the table, then he limped to the door and said to Klein, “You’d better have a good reason!”

After leaving the card room and coming to the corner, Klein said in a suppressed voice, “I want to know when the most recent gathering will be, just like the last one.”

Kaspars looked at him suspiciously. “Haven’t you struck a deal with Maric?”

“It’s not about hiring bodyguards. Regarding that, heh heh, you know... I’ve become very interested in it.” Klein was telling the truth.

Kaspars hesitated and then said, “There will be a gathering tonight. The organizer is the same person as last time, but you’ll have to wait

for more than half an hour. I'll inform them first. You showed your reputation last time, so I don't think there'll be too much of a problem."

"No problem, I'll pay you." Klein touched the bills in his pocket.

"You just need to pay 1 pound this time." Kaspars acted like he was very generous.

"It's worth it," Klein said as the corners of his lips curled up.

After paying Kaspars, he found a seat and sat down, drinking the rich malt-scented Southville beer and enjoying the competition on the ring.

"I can beat and take them down at the same time..." Klein quickly came to this conclusion.

After about ten minutes, Kaspars returned to the bar, looked around, and said in a low voice, "They agreed."

"We'll head there after half an hour. Holy Lord of Storms, I hope you haven't forgotten that mask." Klein gave a positive answer.

He slowed down his drinking as he began sipping, and he took half an hour to finish the 500 ml of Southville beer.

It was the same path they took as the previous time, and it was the same house without any light. Klein put on the iron mask that only covered half of his face, and he watched as Kaspars knocked on the door rhythmically.

The rhythm is different from last time. The knocking changes all the time... Klein listened carefully for a moment, then saw the small plank of the door open and a pair of eyes peer out.

After the indistinguishable process like before, he put on the hooded robe and hid his entire face in the shadows.

It was still the same living room, with a candle flickering in the dim light. Klein randomly found a seat and quietly sat down.

But unlike before, he no longer felt suppressed or tensed; instead, he leisurely looked around.

The cold wind that blew across the back of his neck made him certain that Miss Bodyguard had followed him in without anyone noticing.

As expected, there are no Sequence 5 experts in this gathering. There might not even be a Sequence 6... Klein thought.

After listening in on the conversation for a while, he saw the round-faced Apothecary change his posture as if he wanted to speak.

As expected, the Apothecary who had half his chubby face exposed quickly raised his hand and said, "Black Snake has apparently died in the sewers...

"Those beasts are still rampant."

Black Snake died? Klein was surprised to hear the news.

Black Snake was the man who had sold him the remains of a Listener, allowing him to "successfully" create the Language of Foulness. It was suspected that he was from the Aurora Order.

His strength wasn't low at all; yet, he actually died performing the simple mission of clearing the beasts in the sewers... Klein frowned suspiciously. He suddenly thought of something—

When he discovered Zreal's corpse, he had heard thumping sounds deep in the sewers.

By the time he led Ian there, parts of Zreal's body had been eaten by strange beasts.

That was at the bottom of Iron Carbon Street in the East Borough, quite far from the Backlund Bridge area, and I wonder if there's a connection... Klein had no impulse to verify this.

News of Black Snake's death quickly spread through the dark room, attracting the murmurs of many. A sense of fear spread through them, as though they had experienced it themselves.

The Apothecary clapped his hands and said, "So, what should I do?"

The whispers suddenly disappeared, and a frozen silence filled the room.

As the Apothecary had advised him without being afraid of offending him, Klein thought for a moment and said, "If I were you, I would give up on the rest of the herbs and never go there again."

“Why? They’ll mature very soon, and those beasts that hide in the depths of the sewers usually won’t come out,” the Apothecary asked hesitantly.

Klein deliberately said in a hoarse voice, “Black Snake likely has an organization backing him. His death definitely would’ve caused an investigation. I believe you don’t want to interact with them, right?”

Having the remains of a Listener didn’t imply that Black Snake was an Aurora Order member, by referring to the True Creator as a “great being”, this was confirmed.

Moreover, he would rather believe that this was the case rather than hope for a fluke.

“Yeah.” The Apothecary nodded slightly, seemingly having made up his mind.

Klein added, “If I were you, I would even anonymously report this matter to the police.”

“What?” Many gathering members exclaimed.

Klein explained without a change in tone, “Since the beasts in the sewers can kill Black Snake, it means that they’re very dangerous. And since everyone lives in Backlund, if it really causes a major catastrophe, it’s hard to guarantee that we won’t be implicated.

“That’s why the best option is to attract the attention of the police and let the officials handle this matter.

“We can enjoy a good outcome without any risks. Isn’t that nice?”

Just as he finished his sentence, the old gentleman, Eye of Wisdom applauded.

“Such a great idea! We’re afraid of the official Beyonders, but similarly, we can make use of them. We don’t have to handle everything on our own.”

That’s because I was an official Beyonder, so my train of thought would definitely be different from pure savages like you... Klein smiled as he lampooned.

After speaking, he became a bystander again, listening to people peddling or requesting for items. As he watched the deals which succeeded or failed, he found nothing of interest.

He temporarily didn't announce the Beyonder ingredients he needed, planning to observe the circle of Beyonders a few more times.

Seconds turned to minutes and finally, Eye of Wisdom arranged for people to leave every three minutes.

Klein was the first to leave the previous time, so he didn't know what happened next. Now, he noticed that there were at least five exits. The attendants of the Eye of Wisdom would lead different people to different passages, trying their best to space them out and drag out time.

After more than half an hour, there were only three members of the gathering left. Apart from Eye of Wisdom, the other two were Klein and the suspected Apothecary.

Eye of Wisdom looked at Klein and laughed with his aged voice.

"Looks like you're quite lucky."

He recognized me as the man who had bought the ominous item from Black Snake... Klein smiled. "Yes, my bet paid off."

Hearing their conversation, the Apothecary widened his eyes as he examined Klein. After a long time, he finally said, "Do you have another mystical charm that affects luck? I already regarded you as a dead person."

You're so direct... Klein tactfully answered, "Maybe I'm lucky enough myself."

Actually, he did want such an item.

Eye of Wisdom sighed and said, "Young lad, don't always bet on your luck, especially on matters such as this. Even if you've won many times in the past, just one loss would doom you for

eternity."

“I know. That’s why I’ve come to this gathering to see if I can buy any useful items. Heh, I can be considered the same as all of you now,” Klein said, seemingly casual.

“Same?” The Apothecary gave an exaggerated sigh. “I should’ve listened to my teacher!”

Teacher... He seems to be a suspected Apothecary... The Apothecary pathway is controlled by the Church of Earth Mother and the Life School of Thought... The Life School of Thought passes down their teachings through mentoring... Klein’s heart skipped a beat and asked curiously, “Why do you say that?”

The Apothecary sighed and said, “My teacher told me to choose a path that would make one sufficiently lucky, but in the end, I still became a medicine concocter. As a result, I haven’t been able to find the next batch of potion ingredients for this Sequence for a whole two years. I’m envious of your luck.”

Make one sufficiently lucky... This is very similar to the Sequence pathway for Monster... He really is from the Life School of Thought... Klein smiled and said, “What’s your reason for choosing it?”

The Apothecary suddenly straightened his back and said, “This is a man’s choice!

“After knowing that I can concoct medicine to enhance my ability in that field, I chose this path without hesitation!”

...What a godlike reason... After hearing the Apothecary's answer, Klein was unable to control the changes in his expression despite being a Clown. Fortunately, he was wearing an iron mask over his face.

The Apothecary didn't notice the reactions Klein and Eye of Wisdom had, and he began to let his hair down.

"That's why I really like Backlund. There are a lot of prostitutes prowling the streets, hanging outside music halls, theaters, waiting in the streets and alleys. They're either professionals or working part-time. They were originally maidservants or workers, each with different flavors. It's said that in places in the West Borough, bankrupt aristocratic ladies might occasionally appear. That's really something to look forward to."

"..." Klein nudged the iron mask that covered his face upwards and quickly changed the topic. "Did your teacher have any objections to your choice?"

The Apothecary shook his head slightly.

"No, he just kicked me out of the damn door after teaching me all the knowledge in the field of herbs, telling me to roam the world and experience life. Damn it, he didn't even tell me where to find the next potion ingredients!"

At this point, the Apothecary looked at Klein and added, "If you know where to obtain Spring of the Elves marrow crystals, please do tell me. I'll pay you for it. Of course, you can also first buy it and then sell it to me for a higher price. You're a lucky guy.

Who knows, you might help fulfill my wish."

"Alright," Klein casually agreed. He then asked, thoughtfully, "When that happens, can I use it to exchange for the potion formula for Apothecary?"

From his point of view, an Apothecary was very useful as support. He could use it to groom helpers.

The Apothecary, who wasn't considered too fat, quickly shook his head and said, "No way!

"I can only teach my students."

Is this a rule of the Life School of Thought? He might have made an oath with some secret existence as a witness... Klein wasn't surprised.

At this moment, the Apothecary let out a laugh.

"But I can tell you where you can get the Apothecary formula. It's right here in Backlund."

"Brilliant." Klein was pleasantly surprised.

Realizing that Eye of Wisdom was about to send him off, he hurriedly asked, "Mr. Apothecary, do you have any medication to treat mental disorders and other problems?"

Klein was acting for Miss Bodyguard, to make her feel more assured, having been slightly influenced by the True Creator and becoming a potential lunatic, that he was desperately trying to find a cure.

"Yes, there's a sedative, ten soli for one. I'll bring you four in the next gathering. Trust me, this is definitely much more useful than the ones in the hospitals. I've added some materials with spirituality," the Apothecary replied without hesitation.

How expensive... In the underground market at Tingen, the number of sedatives that originated from the hospitals ranged from 1 to 2 soli, while the variety that leaked from the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind ranged from 4 to 5 soli... As this thought flashed through his mind, Klein put on a show, looked at Eye of Wisdom, and said, "Dear Sir, may I attend the next gathering?"

"Yes, your last two performances are proof of your goodwill. Young lad, watch out for the Backlund Morning Post daily. When there's an advertisement for the purchase of goods by the Ernst Firm on the fifth page, it means that there would be a meeting here at eight o'clock the next evening. The strength and the frequency of the knocking is based on the prices listed. The first number is the number of heavy strikes. The second number is the number of light strikes. The third number is

the number of long pauses and the fourth is the number of short pauses. The rest are meaningless," Eye of Wisdom said with a nod.

After describing the information, he sighed and said, "The lives of Beyonders who are neither official or part of an organization aren't as nice as you imagine. On the one hand, we have to keep secrets, avoid the officials, and at any time, we have to maintain a cautious and careful state. On the other hand, we have to fight against the possibility of losing control and madness. Too many of our kind have died because of these two matters.

"Even if we successfully evade the official's notice and avoid losing control and going crazy, we would still fall into the predicament of lacking ingredients and the inability to find items we want or obtain sufficient knowledge. I organized such a gathering to get everyone to help each other.

"Unfortunately, this is an era of scarce mysteries. Many Beyonder ingredients are rarely seen."

Yes, but I have Mr. Hanged Man who knows the coordinates of some of the primitive islands, and City of Silver's The Sun who is constantly fighting against the various monsters in the depths of the darkness... I can rely on them to obtain some of the Beyonder ingredients... Klein politely stood up with his back bent as he bowed to Eye of Wisdom.

"Your character is admirable."

After sitting down again, Klein suddenly remembered something and asked after some deliberation, "Gentlemen, do you have any mystical items? The kind that Black Snake sold me, but ones without too serious negative effects. I wish to have some sort of ability to protect myself."

His plan was to find something that caught his interest, determine the price, and then determine the target accordingly.

However, I don't have any money right now, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't have any in the future... Can't I make an inquiry about the price without money? Klein silently added in his heart.

The Apothecary spread out his hands, indicating that he didn't have any, and even if he did, he wouldn't sell them. Eye of Wisdom

chuckled and said, “I do have some, but I don’t know what you would like to buy? Give me an approximate range.” *Some... He’s most likely a Savant pathway Beyonder who relies on external items...* Klein didn’t hide his envy as he said, “Something stronger than me. Not something that improves my combat skills. It’s best if it has some mystical powers.”

He didn’t go into details so as to maintain his image as a newcomer.

Eye of Wisdom smiled and said, “I have an item that suits your requirements. It’s former code name was 2-081.” “2-081?” Klein asked, puzzled.

His puzzlement was just a disguise on the surface, but on the inside, he was very shocked.

Is this a Sealed Artifact that leaked out from the Chanis Gate of the Church of Evernight? Klein didn’t expect to see a familiar code name here.

Eye of Wisdom casually explained simply, “Many mystical items have rather obvious side effects that can cause certain harm. Therefore, the seven orthodox Churches would seek them out and seal them. They’re called Sealed Artifacts and are distinguished using numbers as code names.”

“Over a long period of debate and exchanges, the seven churches formed a uniform naming convention. It labels the different danger grades with 0, 1, 2, and 3. Among them, 0 is the most dangerous. Rumors say that some are terrifying items that can destroy countries or even the world.

“The seven orthodox churches will exchange information regarding Grade 0 and Grade 1, telling each other which ones they possess. Therefore, Grade 0 and Grade 1 code names won’t be repeated. Grade 2 and Grade 3 are arranged by their respective churches, so different churches might have the same code name.”

Klein had long known about the general situation within the Nighthawks, but he was puzzled by something.

"Information regarding Grade 0 and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts is exchanged?"

Wouldn't that be disclosing major secrets? It will allow the other churches to know how many hidden cards they have!

Of course, this could also be seen as a form of strategic deterrence, to avoid direct conflict between the seven churches... Klein considered the possible reasons.

"Yes. Although I'm unable to explain the reason for doing that, it has indeed happened. Legend has it that during the end of the Fourth Epoch or the beginning of the Fifth Epoch, the seven churches came to an agreement," Eye of Wisdom said at an unhurried pace. "My 2-081 was obtained from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. It allows you to understand and comprehend many things. Even an enemy's Beyonder powers can be rapidly identified, allowing me to know of their strengths and weaknesses. I'll also have a chance at being able to mimic them. The stronger the opponent, the higher the chance of failure. Of course, even success would definitely result in a huge difference from the original."

That sounds very strong... Proof that knowledge is power? In the end, will there be a situation where omniscience is equal to omnipotence? Hmm... I retract my previous judgment. Old Mister Eye of Wisdom might not be an Appraiser. His identification of items might have relied on Sealed Artifact 2-081... Klein clicked his tongue silently as he asked with interest, "So, how much would I need to buy it?

"What flaws does it have?"

"It will keep you in a state where your mind is churning at high speeds. Once it exceeds the time limit, you'll become a retard," Eye of Wisdom replied simply without providing enough details.

At this moment, the Apothecary beside him muttered, "Perhaps your brain has already been damaged. You keep talking about your collection. Sooner or later, someone will rob you and kill you!"

Sir, your persuasions are always so repugnant... Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

Eye of Wisdom laughed and said, “How do you know that I’m not saying it on purpose to make greedy people attack me?

“Yes, it’s like the entrapment law once described by Emperor Roselle.”

After the laughter stopped, he patted the armrest of his sofa and sighed. “As a person who loves collecting things, it’s excruciating not being able to flaunt my collection to others.” He then looked at Klein.

“I’m sorry. 2-081 isn’t for sale. It’s my best collection, and back then, I spent 6800 pounds to buy it. A Sealed Artifact at this level can cost from 4000 to 20,000 pounds and is determined by its effects and negative side effects. However, most of time, they can’t be bought with money.”

Then why did you say so much... Klein controlled the twitching of his mouth.

Seemingly sensing his reaction, Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, “What I really wish to recommend are two items. The first is a brooch. It can allow you to ward off spirits and purify them, as well as use a portion of the spells in the Sun domain. The flaw is that as long as you wear it, you will never feel coolness. You will forever be stuck in the warm summer of the south. The other is a hat that can change shapes. Wearing it allows you to move freely underwater for at least half an hour and allows you to use some Water or Wind domain spells. The flaw is that you will desire water. Once you walk on land, you will gradually weaken.

“The prices of similar items range from 1500 to 3500 pounds, and sometimes, even if you raise the price severalfold, they aren’t necessarily for sale because they rarely appear. It took me more than three decades to collect a few.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “I’ll think about it, and I’ll make the decision during the next gathering.”

At this point, he deliberately smiled and said, “Besides, I don’t have that much money right now.”

Chapter 258: Murder Case

The concrete road had turned dirty from prolonged rain. Two gas lamps, the height of an adult male, along the two sides of the road emitted a bright but misty light due to the moisture on the glass.

A rental carriage drove through the night as the surrounding pedestrians either wore hats or carried umbrellas.

Klein leaned against the wall, idly admiring the evening streets of Backlund.

At that moment, he suddenly felt the temperature inside the carriage drop significantly. A gloomy and cold wind was swirling about.

Klein jerked his head around and saw that Miss Bodyguard, dressed in a black Gothic regal dress, was sitting opposite him without him even realizing it.

Her voice was ethereal and dreamy.

"That Eye of Wisdom sensed my presence."

As expected... Klein nodded, unsurprised. "He has several mystical items; perhaps he sensed you because of them. I even suspect that he has an organization behind him."

Otherwise, it's quite impossible for Eye of Wisdom to collect several relatively powerful mystical items in thirty years with his power alone. Previously, Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos only had a single Creeping Hunger despite being one of the seven great pirate admirals. Of course, it was possible that the latter had high standards and ordinary mystical items didn't catch his attention. After all, with Creeping Hunger, he could be more well-rounded and nearly be without any weaknesses.

Yes, for Eye of Wisdom himself to be rich there has to be a rather good explanation as well. He's organized so many gatherings, and once he finds a suitable mystical item, he would spare no expense to get it. Having a few in his collection isn't that unbelievable... Sigh, it's like he has a gold mine at home, or he runs a bank... Klein lampooned silently.

He didn't mention in detail that he had guessed that Eye of Wisdom was from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, or from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, out of fear that he would expose to Miss Bodyguard that he wasn't someone who had just become a Beyonder.

The blonde Miss Bodyguard nodded slightly, as though agreeing with Klein's suspicions.

Suddenly, she frowned and looked at the window opposite her.

"A rich smell of blood."

There's a strong smell of blood... Klein turned his head in puzzlement and looked out the window.

There was a secluded alley in the sparse drizzle.

Near the mouth of the alley, a woman wearing a gorgeous dress was on the ground.

At that moment, a pedestrian walked past and on careful inspection, let out a sudden scream.

The screams startled the horse slightly as the carriage driver quickly tightened the reins, slowing down the carriage.

Under the light of the gas lamp, Klein saw the pale face of the woman lying on the ground at the mouth of the alley. There was a deep gash in her stomach, and her internal organs seemed to have been hollowed out.

The blood on the ground around her was flowing slowly, crimson and thick.

This... As a qualified former Nighthawk, he quickly thought of many similar cases.

These were often related to devil worship!

And when it came to devil worship, it was almost always tied to ancient organizations. It was the Blood Sanctify Sect that first appeared in the Fourth Epoch!

According to the records, this was a loose alliance formed due to the worship of devils. It consisted of several so-called devil clans, such as the Nois, Andariel, and Beria clans. They weren't subordinate to each other.

In their bid to proselytize faith in the devil, they committed many murders. Back in Tingen, the accountant for the Nighthawks, Mrs. Orianna, was one such victim who was thankfully saved.

Of course, not all similar cases were committed by them. Many people felt that such acts were very cool and began to imitate them.

"It looks like it was done by the Blood Sanctify Sect," Miss Bodyguard whispered as her figure rapidly turned translucent before vanishing. She didn't care if Klein understood her or comprehended the situation.

At that moment, the carriage had already passed the scene of the crime. Klein also noticed that the patrolling police had arrived, so he held back his idea of getting off the carriage to observe and instead, chose to act as an ordinary citizen who was passing by.

Yes, Citizen Mr. Moriarty...

The Blood Sanctify Sect has the Criminal pathway, which is also known as the Devil pathway. It's said that after Sequence 7, the corresponding Beyonder would gradually turn demonic. However, they would only reveal those signs under certain circumstances...

Sequence 9 Criminals have strong bodies, keen instincts, and a variety of criminal abilities, but their conscience isn't gone yet... Sequence 8, known by its ancient name "Coldblooded," has the modern name "Unwinged Angel." It means that from that moment forth, they lose their conscience and revel in evil desires, with bodies that look even more inhuman. They would also obtain some of the magical powers of the devil. Sequence 7 Serial Killer grasps a good deal of knowledge and rituals regarding devil worship. They like to please the devil with special serial murders...

I don't know the Sequences after that...

The information regarding the Blood Sanctify Sect and the Devil pathway flashed past Klein's mind. The rain outside seemed to become

heavier as the rain on the windows converged and fell, and the whole world became quiet and unclear.

What's the point of thinking so much? Such matters would definitely be taken over by a Beyonder squad. It might be the Mandated Punishers or Nighthawks. There's no need for me to worry. Klein shook his head with a laugh as he muttered in his mind.

By the time he returned to 15 Minsk Street, he had forgotten about the murder case. He went next door and knocked on the Sammers' front door, asking Mrs. Stelyn to tell Mary that she could come for the evidence tomorrow afternoon. Following that, he washed up and read the newspapers, learning about the current situation and news in Backlund.

On Saturday morning the next day, Klein enjoyed his breakfast slowly and went out to pick up the freshly developed photographs. He chose the one with the best view of Doragu Gale's and Erica Taylor's face, one that brought out their passion the most.

After putting the photos away, he went to the Rice Police Station before Mrs. Mary arrived and successfully got the bail money that was worth ten pounds back.

In the process, he also saw the real Sergeant Faxine and felt a little uncomfortable.

After withdrawing the remaining 500 pounds in cash from his account, Klein was finally done with everything after having a busy morning.

Before he prepared lunch, he handed the remaining 600 pounds to Miss Bodyguard in one go, leaving 146 pounds 8 soli, and 5 pence on him. That was all his liquid funds.

Other than Miss Justice, I have no other debts... Klein cooked himself a T-bone steak and sprinkled it with black pepper sauce.

Just as he was enjoying the taste of the medium well steak whilst in a good mood, the doorbell suddenly rang and resounded through his house.

"Mrs. Mary? Isn't this too early?" Puzzled, Klein put down his fork and knife, and he walked to the door.

He paused for two seconds as the image of the visitor outside the door appeared in his mind.

It was an old-fashioned gentleman in a light gray overcoat, a silk top hat, and he held a black and gold cane. He had sharp blue eyes, and his temples were streaked with white. His wrinkles were deeply engraved in his face, causing his facial muscles to seemingly sag.

"May I know who you're looking for?" Klein asked after opening the door.

The old gentleman said in a thick Midseashire accent, "Are you Sherlock, Detective Moriarty?"

"Do you have something you wish to entrust to me?" Klein nodded and made way, leading the old gentleman into the living room.

He hesitated for two seconds, then asked, "Would you like coffee or tea?"

"A cup of hot water, please." The old gentleman had taken off his hat and sat down.

Very well, it's very simple... Maybe I should consider getting an assistant to serve tea and clean the place... As Klein's mind wandered, he turned to the kitchen and rinsed a glass.

After placing the hot water in front of the old gentleman, he walked to the sofa and sat down with his hands folded.

"How may I address you?"

"Millet Carter," the old gentleman answered simply.

"Mr. Carter, what would you like to entrust me with?" Klein asked directly without bothering to exchange pleasantries.

As he spoke, he quietly activated his Spirit Vision to observe Carter.

This old gentleman is in quite good health. There are some problems with the color of the joints of his left leg—probably arthritis... His emotions are mostly blue from calm thinking, with a hint of anxiety... With just a glance, Klein had come to a general conclusion.

Millet Carter lifted the white porcelain cup and, while rubbing its surface, said, “The thing is... I’ve bought a house on Williams Street. Heh, I come from Midseashire and because of my business, I’ll be living in Backlund permanently.”

Williams Street... Where’s that? Having been in Backlund for less than a month, Klein, who had to consult the map or rely on his intuition, tried his best to appear staid and reliable.

Millet Carter looked at him, and under his gaze, he continued, “Rumor has it that the house was originally owned by a bankrupt viscount. That was about two to three decades ago. After a few changes of hands, I finally bought it.

“I planned on doing some renovations that suited the modern style, but I discovered a hidden secret door in the basement which leads to a very large underground structure. Considering that it might not be safe inside, I temporarily stopped construction, and I prevented the workers and servants from rashly exploring it. I hope that you can help me confirm the situation inside the underground structure.”

Underground structure... *Ancient ruins? Secret treasure?* Klein thought and said, “Why didn’t you call the police?

“The resources that the police can mobilize are more than a hundred times that of a private detective like me can muster. The results of the exploration will definitely be better and more reliable.”

Millet Carter rubbed his nose bridge.

“I don’t want too many people to know about this, especially the government.

“If I confirm that there is no danger within the underground structure, then I intend to use it as part of the structure and repurpose it.

“I know that this is a high risk for you, and I’m willing to pay 50 pounds for it. But you can’t have more than three assistants, and I can make up for it later, depending on the circumstances.”

50 pounds, that’s quite a high price... If I were an ordinary detective, that would be equivalent to two or three months of my income... He’s just arrived in Backlund and doesn’t know any other detectives. He

could only read the newspapers to look for hires and ended up coming to me... Klein hesitated for a few seconds.

"Let me think about it."

He suddenly revealed an apologetic smile, pointed behind him and said, "I'm need to use the bathroom."

Millet Carter nodded slightly and took a sip of hot water.

After entering the bathroom and closing the wooden door, Klein looked at the mirror and took out a copper penny.

Because he had Miss Bodyguard with him, he couldn't confirm it above the gray fog, so he could only rely on his own divination skills.

"I should accept this commission."

...

Klein chanted seven times and flicked the coin as he watched it tumble down.

Thud!

The copper coin fell into his palm, and the king's portrait faced up, indicating a positive response.

Klein slightly nodded, and whispered into the air, "What does your intuition tell you?"

Miss Bodyguard's figure quickly appeared in the mirror. She replied expressionlessly, "There's a certain amount of danger, but it's not great."

Very good... Klein put away the coin, washed his hands, and walked out of the bathroom and into the living room.

He looked at Millet Carter and said with a smile, "I'll take this commission."

Chapter 259: Underground Structure

After signing a contract with Millet Carter and receiving an advance payment of ten pounds, Klein didn't rush to Williams Street immediately. Instead, he made an appointment for four in the afternoon.

Millet was understanding with regard to this. Alone, Detective Sherlock Moriarty definitely had to recruit people to carry out the exploration.

When the old gentleman left, Klein immediately returned to the dining table and cut the steak which had turned cold before wolfing it down.

Seriously, doesn't he need to eat lunch? Why must he pick such a time to come... After barely filling his stomach, Klein bitterly began cleaning up.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, Mrs. Mary arrived as scheduled. Her eyes were slightly red and puffy, but her face was turning gloomy. Stelyn Sammer, who accompanied her, had no choice but to maintain her silence.

Klein handed over an envelope containing his carefully chosen photo.

"Madam, please confirm it."

Mary paused for two seconds and slowly took in a breath. Then, she took the envelope, pulled out the photo, and examined it. "...Excellent, very excellent. You're the most efficient and responsible detective I've ever met. I'm honored to introduce you as a member of the Quelaag Club... This is the remaining 7 pounds for the payment. You deserve it." Mary took out a wallet from her leather handbag and counted out a five-pound note and two one-pound notes.

Then, without waiting for Klein's response, she stuffed the photo back into the envelope, put it into her handbag, and abruptly got up to leave.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Her buttonless boots made hurried sounds as she stomped on them. Stelyn Sammer struggled to keep up.

As she opened the door, Mary stumbled and almost fell, but fortunately, Stelyn caught her.

With this episode, Mary clearly slowed down and seemed to turn calm.

Madam, you forgot to take the portable camera... I'll give it to Mrs. Sammer later, and she'll bring it to you... Klein silently watched this scene, slightly shaking his head without saying anything.

He returned to the second floor, took a nap, waking up comfortably to the bell chimes of the nearby church.

Klein had already searched the map and confirmed that Williams Street was at the border of the West Borough and Empress Borough, a residential area in the heart of Backlund.

A nice house in West Borough and Hillston Borough costs about 2,500 pounds. Millet Carter's house is close to Empress Borough, and it's a property of a former viscount. The area is definitely sizable. The total purchase price will be at least 3,500 pounds, maybe even 5,000 pounds. That will be enough for a pretty decent mystical item... He actually came visiting me without a housekeeper or an attendant, perhaps because he's new in Backlund and hasn't settled in? Klein put on his double-breasted coat, hat, and held his cane before heading out into Minsk Street.

The gas lamps haven't been lit yet, and the streets were surprisingly darker than during the evenings; however, the air was fairly alright, without the suffocating air in the boroughs to the east.

Taking a rental carriage, he went all the way to Williams Street. Klein saw a waiting valet outside the Unit 8 house.

The valet, who was dressed in a red vest and light-colored trousers, bowed respectfully at the incoming visitor.

"Good afternoon, might I inquire if you are Detective Moriarty?"

"Yes, I have an appointment with Mr. Carter." Klein nodded and followed the valet into a mansion with a garden and lawn.

The house was two stories tall. The first floor was in a mess, with a lot of construction materials placed everywhere. There were workers coming in and doing some modifications.

Millet Carter wasn't wearing a hat. Covering his nose, he walked over.

"I'm very sorry about the mess and dirt here, but I do wish that everything will be fine before my family arrives in Backlund. I can only urge them to keep working nonstop."

Having said that, he looked at the valet and instructed, "Continue watching them."

It's no wonder that he didn't bring any servants with him. Even his servants have become supervisors... Klein smiled and said, "I know a lot of doctors. They tell me that the newly renovated houses aren't suitable for immediate occupation. One has to wait at least three months to ventilate it well enough. Otherwise, old people and children who aren't strong enough will easily fall sick."

"Is that so?" Millet led Klein to the basement and asked doubtfully.

"I've never verified it, but I chose to believe in authority. It's said that this originated from the words passed down by Emperor Roselle," Klein casually fabricated an excuse.

Millet nodded, then turned to look at the door. He couldn't help but frown before asking, "Mr. Detective, you didn't bring an assistant?

"There might be quite a bit of danger in that structure."

I have an assistant; it's just that you can't see her... Klein lampooned as he said seriously, "This is my first visit, so I'll advance very carefully. If there are any problems, I will immediately retreat.

"I'm experienced in this area, so I won't put myself in a dangerous situation. If I were matched with inexperienced assistants, it might easily affect my nimble and decisive actions."

Millet was startled.

"You're very professional."

A professional bluff... Klein silently added.

Without any further doubts, Millet led Detective Moriarty through the cluttered living room and down the stairs to a fairly spacious basement.

There were no gas pipes here, but four metal candlesticks were set into the walls, their yellow lights flickering.

Stepping on the stone pavements on the ground, Klein couldn't help but sigh in reflection.

As expected of a noble's property. Even the basement has been "nicely decorated." Furthermore, it's almost as big as the living room of my current house...

At this moment, Millet pointed ahead and said, "There's a secret door over there. It was discovered by the workers when they were renovating."

Klein focused his gaze. With the not-very-bright candlelight, he saw a gray stone door in the corner. It should've been part of the wall, but it was now exposed.

"I'll leave the rest to you. Be safe." The old gentleman, Millet, gave Klein a lighted lantern and cautioned him.

"Has this place been ventilated ahead of time?" Klein asked cautiously.

Millet shook his head indiscernibly.

"It's not particularly stuffy inside, but I didn't let the workers go too far."

"Alright." Klein checked his belongings, put on a black glove, and, under Millet's gaze, unhurriedly carried the lantern and approached the stone door. He pushed it open with his cane.

Amidst the heavy creaking sounds, through the light outside, he saw a deep-colored passageway paved with stone.

There were several wooden doors on both sides of the passageway and at the end. They had already begun to rot, but they were still barely usable.

Not too ancient... However, the ostentatious style of the door and the depth and thickness of the stone slabs don't match... Did the viscount's family change it before? Klein quietly activated his Spirit Vision, gripped his cane, and walked forward, step by step, with the lantern in hand.

The light dispersed the darkness, and when he passed by the rooms on either side, he was able to see a somewhat empty scene through the

open door which was likely opened due to the exploration from the workers Millet had hired. There was also a long bench and a table that shared the same aesthetic style as the door.

There's no sign of spirits flashing... Klein did a brief inspection. Without stopping, he proceeded forward until he came to the end of the hall where a black stone double door was.

Stretching out his gloved right hand, he half-clamped his cane and slowly pushed against the door.

A jarring sound of friction began to reverberate through the air as the stone door slowly cracked open. Spirit light suddenly appeared in Klein's eyes, reflecting an intertwined aura of different colors.

His heart tightened as he pushed the door open, before taking a few steps back.

The crack in the stone door widened rapidly, and a slimy black creature fell from above.

It was a snake with a triangular head and red floral patterns on its head!

It straightened its upper body, shot out its tongue, and looked at Klein with cold brown eyes.

One snake after another fell from above the door as they piled up at the entrance.

Klein saw a large hall beyond them. In the middle of the hall, countless snakes of various colors slithered together, forming an exaggerated nest of snakes about ten meters wide. The slimy, disgusting feeling assaulted his senses.

Klein felt his scalp turn numb as he couldn't help but take two steps back. He even wanted to look away without daring to look straight ahead.

Although he was a man, he was still afraid of snakes. Snakes were the animal that he was most afraid of.

This stemmed from a psychological trauma in the past. When he was a child—despite being way past his bedtime—he liked to secretly open

the door to his room and watch movies with his parents through a crack.

Unfortunately, his parents once watched a snake disaster movie. One scene involved the demolition of a building. The result was the unearthing of a large nest of snakes, and the dense squirming remained deeply imprinted in his mind.

Can the Slumber Charm affect so many snakes? Klein swallowed hard and said to the air, "Do you have any solutions?"

Miss Bodyguard in her black Gothic dress quickly appeared by his side, her mouth tightly closed. She didn't say a thing.

Klein looked at her and she looked back at Klein, but no one spoke.

When a snake slowly slithered out, Klein finally coughed and repeated, "Do you have any solutions?"

Miss Bodyguard didn't answer. Instead, she floated and suddenly, a cold wind blew in the passageway.

Whoosh!

The wind howled as it blew into the hall. The temperatures dropped rapidly as it approached the temperatures of the outside world.

Whoosh!

The densely-packed snakes in the middle of the hall suddenly slithered in all directions, searching for a warmer, more suitable spot to survive.

Two to three minutes later, a thin layer of frost formed on the surface of the hall and the passageway, and countless snakes had disappeared without much of a trace.

Whoosh!

The continued as Klein said, chattering, "T-that's quite enough."

The surging cold wind slowed down, but the cold didn't subside. Miss Bodyguard's figure disappeared once again.

Klein lifted his cane-wielding right hand, covered his mouth and nose, and sneezed. Then, he raised the lantern and cautiously walked through the stone door into the wide hall.

The style here was identical to the passageway outside. There were eight circular columns of the same color erected there.

Metal poles hung from the high dome, and at the bottom were candlesticks carved into different creatures.

An upside-down candlestick... As a university student of the History department, a person who could barely be called an elite in this field, Klein made a preliminary judgment based on this unique arrangement.

A structure of the Fourth Epoch?

Chapter 260: Strange Statues

The history circles of the Northern Continent countries all recognized that the Fourth Epoch was shrouded in thick mystery. It was impossible to tell what it truly was.

The historical records had too many missing pieces and ambiguities for this period of history. There were too few tombs, ancient cities, and literature, that had been unearthed to create an effective confirmation.

However, this didn't mean that no one had done the relevant research. Its rarity implied that there were still some relics and information left behind.

The original Klein was a fanatic towards the history of the Fourth Epoch. He often read journal articles and books, so even now, Klein still remembered a lot of content.

Whether it was the Solomon Empire, Tudor Empire, or Trunsoest Empire, they all had similar architectural styles, architectural styles that went against common sense—they were disorderly, asymmetrical, and they stood out for their frequent use of black.

The most typical characteristic were the candlesticks hanging from the ceiling and the chopped floral pattern marks on black walls.

This was precisely why Klein's first reaction was that the underground structure belonged to the Fourth Epoch when he raised his lantern. He had seen circular metal poles with candlesticks embedded at the bottom, that ran down from the dome, reminding him of the Fourth Epoch which was shrouded in mystery, leaving many historians and archaeologists regretful of the lack of knowledge in that ancient period.

Several journal articles have mentioned that the number of candlesticks within different buildings are different. Although the three Empires find asymmetry beautiful, they seemed to have strict and meticulous rules in every aspect... Three on the left, and two on the right is the highest standards that ordinary citizens can enjoy. This is based on the structure of the buildings and the houses that remain... Klein raised his arm and held the lantern high. He walked slowly, counting the candlesticks on both sides.

The hall was even wider than he had expected. He had walked for at least a hundred meters before he saw a platform half a meter above the ground. Only then did he see the thick wall that marked the end of the hall.

41 inverted candlesticks on the left, and 40 on the right. T-this is a bit of an exaggeration. What level of aristocracy is this? Powerful nobility? Sigh, the Antigonus and the Zaratul families are all aristocrats of the Fourth Epoch... They were also powerful and terrifying Beyonder family clans. The other noble families should be about the same... Holding the lantern in hand, Klein continued onward. He saw the stairs at the side of the halfheight platform and saw the scuffing on the black stone tiles.

Is this really a relic of the Fourth Epoch? A thought flashed through Klein's mind. With his keen eyesight and the light from the lanterns, he found two iron black seats on top of the platform that was half a meter above the ground. The huge, ancient seats overlooked the other seats below.

There were two seats!

Two? Why two? According to the layout, the seat here should represent the person with the most power and authority, but there are two of them? A powerful noble of equal strength? A double count, a double duke, or a double prince? Klein slowly began to feel that his knowledge of history was inadequate.

He clearly remembered that many journal articles mentioned that the three empires—Solomon, Tudor, and Trunsoest, had a strict hierarchy. Based on this theory, there shouldn't have been leaders of equal standing within a faction.

"Strange..." Klein mumbled, in a way meant for Miss Bodyguard.

"What's so strange about that?" An ethereal voice suddenly sounded from behind him. In the vast, dark, empty, and silent ancient hall, this voice was exceptionally frightening.

Klein's mouth twitched as he explained the characteristics, history knowledge, and puzzling points that he had observed to her. He

eventually added, “The ventilation here is very good. I wonder if there are any other entrances.”

Miss Bodyguard, who had mostly blended into the darkness, listened silently as she gave Klein a penetrating glance.

“How do you know so much?”

Because I was a university student in the History department... Klein cursed silently before smiling.

“If I hadn’t chosen to be a detective, perhaps I would’ve become a diligent young historian.”

Miss Bodyguard didn’t respond, nor did she disappear; instead, she floated up to the platform first.

With the lantern in hand, Klein quickly followed, discovering that the platform was very large. It was about 40 meters in length and 10 meters in breadth.

“The architectural style is grand and enlarged. It’s also one of the characteristics of the Fourth Epoch,” he said casually as he carefully approached the two huge iron-black chairs. He then raised his lantern and carefully inspected it.

“It seems to be meant for a three-meter-tall giant to sit on... There’s an emblem on the back of the chair. On this side, it’s a black crown... On the other side, it’s a hand holding onto a scepter... I wonder what they symbolize on their own...” Klein said to himself, not expecting an answer from Miss Bodyguard.

However, the lady who was floating suddenly said, “This is the Tudor family’s emblem.”

“Huh?” Klein looked over in surprise, noticing that Miss Bodyguard was referring to the hand holding the scepter.

Tudor family? Is this a relic of the Fourth Epoch’s Tudor Dynasty? Which royal family member owned this palace? Klein frowned and said, “Do you recognize the other emblem?”

To think that it was ranked as equal to a Tudor family member!

Miss Bodyguard shook her head without a word.

Seeing this, Klein had to give up the idea of studying it for the time being and said, “After the Tudor and Trunsoest families established their respective empires, they both maintained the original style that originated from the Solomon Empire, such as inverted candlesticks, scuffed marks, and so on and so forth. This doesn’t comply with common sense. If I were the emperor, even if I had to inherit many things, I would still make certain changes to mark my uniqueness.

“Does this mean that the three empires have hidden, unchanging connections?”

He guessed that Solomon, Tudor, and the Trunsoest families wielded the Black Emperor, which was the Lawyer pathway. Similar styles were needed for acting!

Miss Bodyguard remained silent for a few seconds before saying a few words, “Only an Emperor can be called an Emperor.”

Is this a confirmation of my idea? Klein didn’t ask any more questions. With the lantern in hand, he circled the two huge iron-black chairs, but he didn’t discover anything else.

“Let’s take a look ahead,” Klein suggested.

Before he finished his sentence, Miss Bodyguard had already floated towards the end of the platform, but the surrounding gloominess and coldness remained unchanged.

A few meters ahead, Klein saw—with the help of the lantern’s glow—seven large, heavy, black stone doors at the base of the hall. They were lined up, two on the left, one in the middle, four on the right, perfectly in line with the Fourth Epoch’s pursuit of asymmetry.

Klein passed the cane to his lantern hand, tossed a coin at random, and whispered, “I should begin from the left.” *Ding!*

The copper penny tumbled down and landed on his palm, portrait facing up.

“Let’s go to the left.” Klein took the lead.

Miss Bodyguard silently followed until they reached the door on the far left before saying ethereally, “It’s the same on the right.”

In other words, it didn’t matter whether I did the divination... The corner of Klein’s mouth curled up as he raised the lantern and examined the symbols and patterns on the door.

With a deep-black background, it was a crimson half-moon that was surrounded by radiant points of light.

This... Klein’s pupils constricted suddenly.

This is the Dark Sacred Emblem! The symbol of the Evernight Goddess!

During the Fourth Epoch, the Church of Evernight had supported the Tudor Dynasty? He thoughtfully placed his hand on the stone door.

Screech!

The black stone door slowly opened amidst rough and heavy grinding sounds.

As the light from the lantern shone into the room, Klein began to see the interior, bit by bit.

There was a few meters of open space at the entrance—also paved with dark stone tiles—and a platform nearly a meter high.

Klein cautiously moved forward, holding up the lantern to illuminate the item on the platform.

A few seconds later, a fiery radiance formed the outline of a huge statue. It was about four to five meters long and almost filled the entire room.

It was an extremely beautiful lady with a hazy face. Her right hand supported her head as she laid down on the platform. She wore a layered black classical dress that wasn’t overly complex. There was a circle of radiating rays at the bottom of her head.

On this lady’s dress, there were sparkling specks of radiance. They were pieces of bright and resplendent gems.

At first glance, Klein felt as though he was seeing the night and the stars.

This was outlined against a circular shape under the lady's head that resembled a full moon.

This... Klein's thoughts seemed to freeze, but a guess immediately plowed its way from within.

"Evernight Goddess?" Miss Bodyguard's voice carried a rare hint of puzzlement.

Be it the symbolism or the actual form, it seemed to be a sculpture of the goddess! Klein's guess finally took shape, echoing loudly in his mind.

He remembered asking Captain Dunn Smith about one of the differences between an evil god and a true god. The former was said to have an image that resembled that of an intelligent lifeform, but the latter only had Sacred Emblems formed by symbols!

But today, at this very moment, in this ancient and bizarre underground structure, he saw a statue that looked like the Evernight Goddess.

What did this mean? Just thinking about it made Klein shudder.

Could it be that the goddess was once an evil god?

No.... Maybe it's some other evil god that falls into the night domain... However, the Dark Sacred Emblem by the door is no different from the one that is being used presently...

Or perhaps, having the image of an intelligent being isn't a standard method to distinguish between true gods and evil gods? After all, the Captain's level wasn't high enough, and his understanding of the situation wasn't necessarily accurate enough.

It was also possible that the Tudors were deliberately blaspheming the goddess!

Yes, it could also be a way of setting up some strange ritual!

Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind. It left him feeling puzzled, nervous, and tense. However, he also felt a strange feeling which couldn't be described.

After looking around, Klein, who didn't see anything else, took a deep breath and said, "Let's go to the other doors and take a look."

I wonder what the other six doors correspond to. Would it be equally strange and evil... He thought gravely.

Miss Bodyguard nodded slowly.

When he was out of the room, Klein carefully held his cane and lantern in the same hand, leaving his left hand free so that he could retrieve the contents of his pocket as quickly as possible in the event there was a sudden turn of events.

Inside, there were charms, Azik's copper whistle, some tarot cards, and apart from the remaining Rosago's characteristic, the All-Black Eye, his pocket contained all the means available to him.

Klein and Miss Bodyguard had barely taken a step to the side when the light of the lantern illuminated the emblem on the door next to them. It was a simple drawing of a baby surrounded by the symbols of wheat, flowers, and spring water.

"The Sacred Emblem of Earth Mother..." Klein said in a solemn voice.

As a former Nighthawk, one of his basic skills was being able to distinguish the symbols of other churches.

Miss Bodyguard nodded slightly, as though to confirm this.

Her black Gothic regal dress looked even eerier and terrifying in such an environment and atmosphere. Her pale face looked like a grieving wraith under the illumination of the lantern.

If any other adventurer were to come here and see this scene, they would definitely flee while stumbling out of fear.

Holding his breath, Klein reached out with his left hand, pushed open the stone door, and raised the lantern high.

He found that the layout here was very similar to the one before, like a perfect fusion between a small prayer room and a giant statue.

Across the empty wheat-colored stone tiles, Klein illuminated the three steps ahead of him with a lantern.

On the platform was a white stone sculpture about four or five meters tall. It was a plump and beautiful lady, with ears of wheat growing from her feet, and she was surrounded by spring water. Her dress seemed to flutter, and embedded in it, there were different herbs and flowers, as well as the depiction of different animals.

The lady's chest was raised high, and in her arms was an adorable infant in swaddling clothes. She stood there, tall and sacred.

"Don't tell me that this is the statue of Earth Mother?" Klein said softly with his lips curled.

Miss Bodyguard didn't confirm or deny it.

After checking their surroundings, the duo left the room and opened the third door nearby.

Behind this door was a corridor that allowed four people to walk alongside each other. Ahead of them, it was dark and deep, filled with mystery and oddities; it was unknown where it led to.

"Let's first confirm the situation behind the four doors on the right," Klein suggested.

He didn't dare to rashly enter.

Using her actions as an answer, Miss Bodyguard floated backward.

The duo opened the four stone doors on the right, in succession. They separately saw the Storm Sacred Emblem, which was made up of the symbol of gales and stormy waves; the Sacred Emblem of the Sun, which was surrounded by lines; the Sacred Emblems of the God of Combat, which was made from the combination of the symbol for dusk and a sword-shaped symbol; as well as the Sacred Emblem of Knowledge and Wisdom, which was represented by an open book and an omniscient Eye.

In contrast, there were four suspected statues of deities in the room.

A dignified middle-aged man in black armor, standing over churning waves, surrounded by stormy winds, with lightning flashing behind him and a trident in his hand.

There was a young man in a pure white robe, holding a book of deeds in one hand and a golden sphere which resembled the sun in the other. He was handsome and spirited.

There was a warrior sitting on a throne high above, holding a sword in front of him. His face was hidden behind his helmet's visor, his entire body covered with an indescribable sense of decay.

There was a hooded elder holding a book and the omniscient eye, with only his mouth, wrinkles, and long white beard exposed.

Apart from the God of Steam and Machinery, there were six humanoid statues of the orthodox Gods in this strange hall.

Considering the weak position of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery before the appearance of Roselle, there seemed to be some sort of explanation regarding this problem.

"This is really strange..." Klein exclaimed with a sigh, partially because he couldn't stop it, and partially because he was testing Miss Bodyguard's reaction.

This grand hall, which was a hundred meters deep, actually had six of the orthodox gods collected within it.

This was something unimaginable in the current era!

How could the Church of the Six True Gods allow their gods to live in the same structure as the other gods?!

This was a custom that only existed during the Fourth Epoch? Also, what's with those humanoid statues? Although they look normal, unlike the sinister Primordial Demoness and the True Creator statues, they still give off weird vibes... Just what had happened to make the images of the six gods evolve into abstract symbols in this day of age... No, perhaps it's been like this all this time, but the master of this place, a noble who's suspected to be a member of the Tudor family, purposely created statues of the six deities for some purpose... Hmm, I thought of an item from a novel from my previous life, the Six Soul Banner... While he waited for Miss Bodyguard's reply, Klein's mind wandered.

Miss Bodyguard didn't answer his query and instead said blandly, "There's another door."

That's right... Klein suddenly felt fear.

In his opinion, doors placed in the center often had a special meaning, perhaps the core of this ancient building.

Of course, this also meant that the situation was most likely the most dangerous.

“What are your thoughts on that area?” Klein hesitated for two seconds and directly asked.

Under the situation of not being able to use the gray fog to eliminate any interference, he felt that Miss Bodyguard’s spiritual perception and spiritual instincts were more reliable than his divination means at present. After all, she was in a very special state, close to that of a spiritual body, allowing her to communicate with the spirit world without any obstruction to gain revelations.

Miss Bodyguard closed her eyes and replied a few seconds later, “Very dangerous.

“But the danger is subdued.

“Once you venture deeper, don’t touch anything.”

Subdued danger... Is this equivalent to having something sealed inside? As Klein guessed, he and Miss Bodyguard walked to the central stone door and stepped onto the dark floor.

The light of the lantern seemed to dim a little as though it found it difficult to drive out the darkness ahead. Klein had his left hand in his pocket, holding Azik’s copper whistle and a few charms.

After about thirty steps, Miss Bodyguard suddenly stopped.

Klein raised the lantern in his right hand and saw that the road ahead was blocked by boulders and dirt.

On the left and right were two stone doors in the same shape as the ones in the main hall. The right side was ajar and filled with mud and stone.

“Perhaps this ancient structure was aboveground back then, but for some reason, it eventually sank and collapsed,” Klein mumbled. “There’s only one direction we can choose from.”

Before he could finish his words, he saw Miss Bodyguard float ahead, stick to the huge rock, fuse into it, and disappear.

Klein’s mouth twitched, and he began to patiently wait.

After a few minutes, Miss Bodyguard came out from the mud on the right, her body completely free of dust.

"It's completely collapsed," she concluded flatly.

For a moment Klein was speechless and could only smile.

Following that, the two of them simultaneously looked to the left where the ajar stone door was. There was a tiny crack.

Klein went closer and carefully looked through the three centimeter gap.

His Spirit Vision, which had originally been blocked by the stone door, immediately discovered something.

There were at least four bright and powerful spiritual lights inside, two that were close to dark gold in color, and two that were dark blue like the sea.

After using his Spirit Vision, a "narrow" scene appeared in Klein's normal vision.

The firelight that entered the room illuminated the black stone tiles. On top of the tiles were piles of bones covered with rotten clothing, and a few of them emitted dark gold and dark blue light.

Condensed Beyonder characteristics? Mystical items? As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein swept his gaze to the ends of the room.

Along the dark wall stood a double door.

A bloody pair of double doors!

There seemed to remnants of fresh blood on the door. They continued sliding down as they reflected the light.

Klein had wanted to let Miss Bodyguard scout the way ahead when he suddenly felt a change in Azik's copper whistle that he was holding in his hand!

The originally cold and mild whistle suddenly became bonepiercing. It was a profound feeling of death!

This... Klein narrowed his eyes and instinctively took a step back.

Then, he noticed that his right forearm was numb and itchy and that it was beginning to swell.

A scene flashed through his mind as he immediately took out a tarot card with his left hand and slashed across his arm.

What surged out from his wound wasn't blood, but tiny black squirming worms!

Sizzle!

When these worms fell to the ground, they eroded into smoke.

They struggled and huddled, but in the end, they melted under the glow of the lanterns.

After a few seconds, all the black worms in Klein's wound finally flowed out, leaving only crimson liquid.

He wriggled his muscles to control the small wound and prevented the blood from flowing further.

Miss Bodyguard watched this scene quietly, her pretty eyebrows creasing into a rarely seen frown.

Klein was just about to speak when he discovered the coldness and deadliness of Azik's copper whistle hadn't abated.

At the same time, his gaze landed on Miss Bodyguard's shadow.

She never had a shadow to begin with!

"Run!" Klein shouted and immediately ran towards the hall.

Miss Bodyguard quickly floated up, and the two of them saw the lantern light in front of them gradually being swallowed up by a black shadow.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein ran like a hurricane as fast as he could while the light around him faded away.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The shadow grew bigger and bigger, closer and closer, thicker and thicker. The light from the flame was about to be completely engulfed, and at that moment, the door was still a few meters away.

At that moment, Klein instinctively rushed forward and then rolled across the stone door.

The light from the fire suddenly brightened, and the uneasiness in his heart instantly disappeared. Azik's copper whistle also returned to its mild and cold state.

Miss Bodyguard floated beside him as she turned around and looked at the passageway which had once again sunk into darkness. She said with an uncertain tone, "Evil spirit..."

Evil spirit? Klein almost drew a deep breath when he heard that. Fortunately, as a Clown, he was good at controlling his expression and reactions.

In the field of mysticism, evil spirits were extremely terrifying monsters. The best of them could even be said to be on the same level as High-Sequence Beyonders!

An evil spirit is wandering within this ancient structure? For some reason, it's bound or imprisoned within that room? Hmm... If it was an evil spirit, that explains why Mr. Azik's copper whistle responded. An evil spirit can be considered as an undead creature... Klein stood up and also looked at the path which was now submerged in darkness. He felt as if there was a pair of cold eyes staring at him!

In the cold and gloomy hall, Klein suddenly shivered. He retracted his gaze and said to Miss Bodyguard, "Let's return."

From the way Azik's copper whistle reacted, it's likely that the room contains a terrifying evil spirit. Its danger level is highly likely to be above that of Marionettist Rosago and Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos... It's been roaming these confines for centuries to thousands of years. Perhaps it's already equivalent to a High-Sequence Beyonder. If it wasn't for its experiencing difficulties in letting its powers escape the room, I would already be dead... Even if Miss Bodyguard is a powerful Sequence 5, there's no hope of us turning the tides of battle with our powers combined... One needs to be aware of one's strength. I cannot be enticed by the suspected Beyonder characteristics and mystical items left in there... Greed often leads to death... Klein silently came up with a reason to convince himself.

Miss Bodyguard turned her head to look at him. Without much emotion in her eyes, she asked, "What happens next?"

Next? Klein silently gritted his teeth and said with deliberation, "Let Millet Carter get the police. Who knows when this evil spirit will escape. It's best to finish it as soon as possible. No, that won't work. Mr. Carter doesn't know enough. By informing the police this way, the police department won't pay enough attention to it. The first batch of people who come to explore this place will suffer heavy casualties, and they might even indirectly help the evil spirit escape from its restraints. Also, for me to see these statues, a detective like me might be silenced... Uh... Did you see the bones and spiritual light in the room?"

Miss Bodyguard once again cast her gaze towards the dark path behind the ajar stone door, and very slightly nodded her head.

Klein thought quickly and said, "My guess is that these are the corpses of the explorers from before. They were killed by the evil spirit in that room, and one of the Beyonders left behind some mystical items. This might have had something to do with the viscount family that lived beyond this premises. I plan to inquire about their last names, go to the

library, and look for information about their descendants. Perhaps, I might gain some valuable clues.

"After coming to a preliminary confirmation of the situation, I'll make a choice based on the severity of the situation. I might get some explosives, destroy the door, or send an anonymous letter to the police, detailing the existence of the evil spirit. However, I'll have to think of a way to avoid the risk ahead of time.

"This isn't too urgent. I can take my time."

Miss Bodyguard quietly listened to what Klein had to say. Looking ahead, she said in an ethereal voice, "Are you not considering to get people to exorcise this evil spirit?

"Even if there were no mystical items left behind, the remains after the evil spirit dissipates are still precious enough."

It's the first time I've seen you talk so much... Probably... Klein replied without hesitation, "The risk is too high. I think my life and health are more important."

He organized his words and added, "The most powerful person I know is you. And from your performance just now, you don't seem to be a match for that evil spirit. I can't imagine any other way of finishing it, other than calling the police."

Miss Bodyguard turned around, her pale face somewhat translucent.

"You still have some sense," she commented calmly, then drifted toward the exit of the ancient hall.

Other than being suspected to be under the True Creator's influence, in what way do I look like a madman? Klein silently lampooned. He held the lantern and cane and followed behind Miss Bodyguard. Throughout the entire process, he felt as if he was being watched by the cold eyes of the dark corridor.

It was only when they walked out of the stone door that suffused an ancient aura did the feeling suddenly disappear.

Klein turned around and closed the door, sealing the inverted candlesticks, scuffed marks, and the creepy statues of the six deities,

allowing them to continue their thousand-year-long "slumber" in that unchanging darkness and silence.

Patting the dust off his clothes, he switched the lantern in his other hand and hurried back to Millet Carter's basement. As for Miss Bodyguard, she had disappeared into thin air as usual.

Millet Carter was pacing about in the basement. When he saw Klein exit, he hurriedly asked, "How is it? What's the situation inside?"

Klein had long thought of an excuse as he said with an expression of fear, "Terrible, there are a lot of snakes in there, and many spots have collapsed. I plan to gather some information, gather some manpower, and once preparations are done, do another round of exploration. During this period of time, it's best that you don't send anyone in. Believe me, there are more venomous snakes in there than you can imagine." Millet drew a gasp and asked in fear, "Will they slither out?

"Do you know any experts that can deal with the snakes?"

Klein immediately nodded. "I'll get people to help and try my best to deal with this matter. It's the cold autumn now, and the snakes aren't willing to move. As long as you don't send anyone to disturb them, nothing will happen."

"Okay, please hurry. I'll close this door and prevent anyone from entering." Hearing that, Millet relaxed a little.

When Klein saw that his employer was truly intimidated by what he said, he quickly put down the lantern, nudged his goldrimmed spectacles and said, "Next up, I'll gather some information. I'll first gain a preliminary understanding of the layout of the underground structure before I explore it again.

"That requires you to tell me which viscount was the original owner of this house."

Millet had bought this building precisely because it was an estate of a former noble, so he answered immediately, "Viscount Pound."

"What do you know about him and his family?" Klein asked in a professional manner.

Millet pondered and said, “Not much. I only know that he won his aristocratic title in the Battle of the Violated Oath. It once enjoyed an illustrious period, but decades later, suddenly declined due to unknown reasons. The family kept losing its heirs, causing it to eventually have to seek out distant relatives to keep the aristocratic title. And the new Viscount Pound is, heh heh. He squandered most of the family’s fortune, and he was demoted to baronet by the king. He’s probably still in Backlund and can go bankrupt at any moment.”

Battle of the Violated Oath? The Battle of the Violated Oath that began in 738 during the Fifth Epoch? Having successfully graduated as a history student, Klein instinctively recalled the corresponding knowledge.

The war that happened about six centuries ago was a war involving religion. The southern Feynapotter Kingdom originally believed in both Earth Mother and the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, but due to some influencing factors, the two churches began to be at odds with each other, and their believers often clashed.

During that period, its two neighbors in the north, the Loen Kingdom and the Intis Kingdom, seized the opportunity to start a war in the name of protecting freedom of religion. In the later stages of the war, the Feysac Empire joined the fray and attempted to destroy the ploy by Loen and Intis. However, they still failed to turn the situation around.

The result of the war was that the border between Loen and Feynapotter, as well as Intis and Feynapotter, countries such as Lenburg, Masin, and Segar, gained independence. They mainly believed in the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, leaving the Church of Earth Mother as the only religion in the Feynapotter Kingdom.

The conflict that lasted five years was called the Battle of the Violated Oath because both sides of the war accused their adversaries of violating the Holy Oath at the end of the Fourth Epoch.

After that, there was more than 300 years of peace in the Northern Continent. This didn’t mean that there was no conflict between nations, but rather, there were no wars on that scale again. It lasted until Roselle invented the steam engine and improved the sailboats and artillery.

This is the information recorded in the history textbooks... Thinking about it now, since it involved faith, there must've been some Beyonders from the Church involved. There must've been an intense Beyonder war... However, it's said that that era was a period with few Beyonders... Squadron battles? Could the Pound family's sudden waning and continuous loss of heirs, which happened decades ago, have something to do with the discovery of the ancient structure underground? Klein thoughtfully asked, "Do you know where Baronet Pound currently lives?"

"I'm sorry, I don't know." Millet shook his head slightly.

Klein asked a few more questions, but seeing that he couldn't get any more information, he bade farewell and returned to 15 Minsk Street.

It was almost five in the afternoon and the sky was as dark as the night. Klein thought that the public libraries would've be closed by then, so he temporarily put aside the underground structure and prepared dinner for himself.

He had wanted to learn to make Feynapotter noodles based on a recipe in the newspapers, but he ended up with noodles mixed in meat, sauce, and vegetables. To his surprise, it tasted pretty good.

After having had his fill, Klein tossed a coin casually, divining if he should inform the police. He received a negative answer.

...

The Backlund evening was as serene as other cities, at least in Cherwood Borough.

Klein was sleeping soundly, wandering through different dreams in an adrift manner when he suddenly realized, with a jolt, that he was dreaming.

Someone is invading my dreams? Klein resisted the urge to frown and pretended to look around in confusion.

He found himself in a scorching yellow desert.

A roar suddenly came from the sky, and a huge monster dyed in black and gold flew over.

The creature had a thick, lizard-like body and a pair of wide wings covered in a hide on its back. It descended and blotted out the sun in the sky.

A dragon! A powerful dragon! Klein saw scales the size of a plate, a gaping mouth that emitted pure light, and two dark golden vertical pupils.

Roar!

The dragon spat out a beam of light that seemed to envelop everything. Soon, large swaths of the desert was obliterated.

Amid the light, a figure jumped into the air.

He was three or four meters tall, but he didn't have the unique vertical eye of the giants. He had a handsome, young face, and he wore black full-body armor which seemed to be spattered with blood.

This giant knight swung his broadsword upwards and countless bluish-white flames, which appeared a little purple, condensed into long spears. They shot at the dragon. It was as if he had an entire army of illusory Beyonders helping him in battle!

In the midst of the meteor shower, the giant knight leaped onto the head of the dragon, and he swung his sword down.

The afterimages he had created earlier instantly overlapped, and the sword rays turned into intersecting lightning.

Pow!

The ground shook wildly, and the dragon fell, splattering its dark gold blood.

At that moment, the scene changed to a huge bloody door. It was the same bloody door that Klein had seen in the ancient structure that very afternoon.

With a creak, the bloody door opened a crack, allowing him to catch a glimpse of a black high back chair.

A man of normal height sat on the high back chair. He had his head lowered, silent and deathly still.

As his vision got closer and closer, Klein saw the man's clothes clearly. He seemed to be the knight that had just killed the dragon, and he was still wearing the black armor that was stained with blood!

The only difference was that he was no longer three or four meters tall.

At this moment, the man suddenly raised his head. His handsome, young face had terrifying signs of decay; his eyes icecold and emotionless.

Klein jumped in fright and awoke from his dream. Opening his eyes, he saw the crimson moonlight shining through the curtains.

Chapter 263: Spiritual Perception and Attempt

Under the dim crimson moonlight, Klein pulled back his blanket and got up.

For a Seer, putting weight on dreams was a basic requirement, and the dream he just had could never be dismissed as a simple nightmare.

Dressed in relatively comfortable clothes, he came before the full-body mirror and said in a low voice, "I dreamed of the bloodstained door in that room."

Miss Bodyguard's figure slowly outlined itself above the mirror. She replied expressionlessly, "The influence of the evil spirit's aura.

"It will gradually weaken until it disappears."

Is that so... Klein nodded slightly and returned to the side of the bed. He picked up the gold pocket watch and popped it open.

Seeing that it was still early, he lay back down to sleep. This time, he no longer encountered the same dream as before.

Sunday morning the next day, in high spirits, Klein made himself a soft-boiled egg to go with buttered bread.

In the Loen Kingdom, or rather in the countries of the Northern Continent, it was a must for gentlemen to read the newspapers at breakfast, and Klein was no exception. He opened up the newspapers he subscribed to—the Tussock Times, Backlund Morning Post, and Backlund Bulletin.

"The Civil Servant Unified Examination Bill has been officially passed by the House of Lords. The first examination will be held in early December, and the second examination will be held at the end of January next year. The final interview will be held two weeks after that... Within a week, the government will announce the positions and requirements involved in this exam and begin the registration process... Reporters surmise that most of it will be held in Backlund..." Klein scanned the contents, picked up his cup, and sipped his Sibe black tea.

He couldn't help but think of Benson and thought to himself, *The bill is passed at the end of September. The positions will be announced in the beginning of October, and registrations will be completed by early November. The examinations will start at the beginning of December... The timing is tight and very unreasonable. That implies how much of a rush the King and the Prime Minister is in to have this enacted.*

But that's advantageous for Benson. He prepared two months ahead of everyone else; even if he can't compare to the elite graduates of the universities, he would definitely be able to beat most of his competition, and the positions the elites are aiming for wouldn't clash with his.

He should be fine...

Klein wanted to tap his chest four times to draw out a crimson moon and say "May the Goddess bless him," but then he remembered that Miss Bodyguard was nearby and resisted the urge. After all, he had claimed to be a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery.

After finishing his last mouthful of bread, he continued reading the papers.

"Both Houses have passed the National Atmospheric Pollution Council bill, allowing the government to set up such an organization... The coming month will be a critical period for the various parties to become a member of the council..."

"...An independent Alkali Industry Public Prosecutor has been approved with the goal of minimizing the pollution levels in acid and alkali factories."

"...The fifth page doesn't have an advertisement for the purchase of goods from the Ernst Firm. There's no need to consider participating in the Beyonder gathering tomorrow night..."

...

Tingen City, 2 Daffodil Street.

Benson read and reread the news in the papers, forgetting the bread on his plate.

“The Civil Servant Unified Examination Bill was passed?” Dressed in a long, black dress, Melissa looked at her brother who was acting oddly.

The newspapers from the past few days had been playing up the bill that would be passed this time.

Benson finally put down the newspaper, wiped his black hair, and exhaled slowly.

“Yes.”

At this moment, the two of them suddenly fell into silence. The room was completely silent, it even lacked the sound of knives and forks colliding with the dining plates.

The indescribable atmosphere was broken by Bella, the maid who came out of the kitchen. Benson smiled and said, “This is foreseeable. Actually, the most important thing is the previous piece of news.”

“Oh?” Melissa’s expression was unusually quiet.

Benson took a bite of his bread and smiled.

“The news that the Backlund Polytechnic of Technology will be restructured into a university.

“It’ll formally accept students next year. It won’t need tests on grammar and classical literature, but will instead focus on the technical aspects. It’s very suitable for graduates and students of technical schools everywhere.

“Melissa, I think you can try.”

“But...” Melissa subconsciously retorted.

Benson interrupted her with a smile.

“Its tuition will be half as cheap as the Tingen, Perth, Kboy, and Backlund and the other universities. It’s equivalent to the Constant Industry University in Midseashire, and there will be even more opportunities for scholarships. Melissa, don’t you like machinery, steam, and this stuff? This is the best opportunity for you to have access to much advanced and deeper knowledge.

“Give it a try, how about it? Don’t worry about wasting money. Although th-that money can allow us to maintain our present lives without working, we’re still young. We must not define our lives like this. As you can see, compared to a few months ago, my grammar has improved a lot.

“Eh... It might be better if we change environments.

“I know you can’t bear to part with Tingen and this place. Well, we’ll come back eventually, but not when we’re young.”

Melissa looked at the various components on the coffee table as her lips moved a few times and she said, “What about Bella...”

After Klein’s death, she didn’t want to hire any more maidservants, but when she thought of how tragic Bella’s life would be after she lost her job, she gave up on the idea. After all, the extra expense of 5 soli a week was already nothing to the Moretti family, which had an annuity of at least three hundred pounds.

To this, Benson shook his head and laughed.

“There are still a few more months before that happens. We can let Bella find a new job ahead of time. Before that, we will continue to pay her and provide her with a bedroom. Furthermore, her cooking skills are much better than before, so she can apply to be a chef at someone’s home. It’s a pity... Heh heh. Of course, everything depends on the premise that you can pass the entrance exams at Backlund’s University of Technology.” He had wanted to say that it was a pity that Bella didn’t have much time to learn how to cook, but after looking at Melissa’s gloomy expression, he forcefully changed the topic.

Before Melissa could say anything, Benson smiled and touched his hair.

“I’m planning on resigning tomorrow and will focus on preparing for the exam. Most of the positions are said to be in Backlund. That’s my goal. I hope we can go there together.”

Melissa was silent for a moment before she slowly nodded her head.

At the same time, she put down her fork and knife, wiped her mouth with a napkin, and said, “I’m going to the bathroom.”

“Alright.” Benson watched his sister leave the dining table, and the smile that had been plastered over his face rapidly vanished.

He took out the silver pocket watch with the vine-leaf patterns, took a close look at it, and sighed very quietly.

...

During the whole of Sunday, Klein busied himself with the public libraries in the Cherwood Borough in search of information related to Viscount Pound, but the viscount’s family didn’t have a single biography, nor did it arouse the interest of any historian to conduct a special study.

They were scattered across the annals of history, and Klein, who had no “search” function to use, felt a throbbing pain in his head as he faced the vast collection of books and essays.

He spent six hours browsing through a lot of information, but failed to find any useful information.

I have to find someone who has a deep knowledge of the history of the nobility. Or I have to bribe someone in the police department to get the address of Baronet Pound. He’s an aristocrat, and the police department must have a corresponding record, and there aren’t many aristocrats. When Klein got home, he stood in front of the mirror and talked to the air.

The surface of the mirror quickly outlined Miss Bodyguard’s Gothic regal dress and the black bonnet on her head.

She nodded slightly, as if agreeing with Klein.

She then suddenly spoke out in a dreamy voice, “The employment period is over.”

I know, the three days are up... Klein thought for a moment and asked, “If I can obtain some clues about the Pound family, would you like to know?”

Miss Bodyguard didn’t answer but gave a slight nod.

“Um... through Maric?” Klein asked.

After nodding her head again, Miss Bodyguard bent down, lifted up her skirt, and bowed.

Her figure quickly disappeared, and the reflection in the mirror was no longer anything special.

Klein looked around and didn't relax as a result of that. He proceeded systematically to prepare dinner and fill his stomach.

He waited until it was late in the night before returning to his bedroom and drew back the curtains. Then, he took out the iron cigar case and reached out to touch Rosago's All-Black Eye.

A series of illusory roars immediately rampaged through his mind, seeming to tear apart his mind and destroy his thoughts.

With great difficulty, Klein resisted the pain which was making his head explode. Once again, he saw the black threads spreading out from different parts of his body.

They were densely packed and illusory, reaching out endlessly.

He quickly released his grip to escape from the negative influence. After nearly a minute, everything returned to normal.

Phew, I can finally go up to the gray fog and verify the spiritual perception I had before... Klein silently said to himself as he quickly set up the ritual, summoned himself, and responded to himself.

Then, in his spirit form, he carried Azik's copper whistle, picked up the iron cigar case, and returned above the gray fog.

Klein sat at seat of honor at the ancient long table, using his fingers to create spiritual flames and burning the bloodstained documents in the corner and any other items that were no longer needed.

When he was done, he opened the iron cigar case and was surprised to find that the All-Black Eye had become silent, no longer showing any signs of madness, but that corruptive influence was still settling within. It just wasn't active, as if it was in hibernation.

"As expected, it's impossible to separate them directly..." Klein muttered. Following that, on the other side of the ancient table, a man in a hooded robe appeared.

Just like his previous attempt to create a clone, this man was stiff and lifeless. It was obvious that he wasn't someone real at a glance. There was no way he could deceive the members of the Tarot Club.

However, Klein already had an idea regarding this.

He extended his hand and held the All-Black Eye. There was silence in his ears, and there were no longer any terrifying howls.

Using the amassed Beyonder characteristic, he could see that there were also black threads floating out from the fake body opposite him.

Soon after, Klein carefully let his spirituality spread out through the All-Black Eye, touching a few of the illusory threads.

All of a sudden, he felt like he was holding onto something.

With a thought from him, the fake person raised his hand.

It worked! I can use the ability of the Marionettist to create a fake Tarot Club member! However, this is draining on me. I'm unable to maintain a second one... Hmm, the symbol on the back of the chair won't change accordingly, but it's not like Miss Justice and the rest can see it... Klein happily practiced, over and over again, even learning how to manipulate his clone's throat and mouth to let him speak.

When his spirituality was almost exhausted, he smiled and said to the fake person in front of him, "Welcome, new member. Which tarot card do you wish to draw?"

After saying that, he closed his mouth. The fake person opposite him lifted his hand to stroke his chin as he laughed hoarsely, "World!

"I choose the card 'The World.'"

If "The Fool" signified the beginning of the tarot club, then "The World" signified the end, a perfect ending of a cycle and sublimation. Klein had named his smurf "The World" because he hoped that it would lead to a beautiful beginning and end.

In the future, I'll be able to make The World make requests or do things that wouldn't be convenient for me. This will greatly reduce the possibility that my image as Mr. Fool will collapse. With an alt, no—a smurf truly is what makes life complete! Klein sighed in relief and waved The World away.

Following that, he spread out his spirituality, wrapped himself, and stimulated a descent into the gray fog and returned to the real world.

He had left Rosago's All-Black Eye above the gray fog. After all, he couldn't usually use the "item" anyway, and he had to constantly worry about having it discovered by others or losing it.

After putting away the summoning ritual materials, Klein looked up towards the crimson moonlight that passed through the curtains, filled with anticipation for tomorrow's gathering.

When it came to understanding the aristocracy, he believed that Miss Justice would definitely surpass 99% of the people of Loen.

And with his smurf, The World, he could directly ask her about the Pound family without worrying about affecting his image as a The Fool!

Of course, this had to be done in a more tactful manner. After all, Detective Sherlock Moriarty was also looking for information on the Pound family, and only with enough information would he be able to perform a divination above the gray fog.

Phew... Klein thought hard for a while before he relaxed and fell asleep.

After entering the gray fog, it was as though the remnants of the evil spirit's aura had completely disappeared. Klein slept until dawn, but he didn't see the sun because of the thin fog outside.

He continued as planned, heading to the rest of the public libraries in Backlund, but he no longer queried the librarians nor did he mention the Pound family. He only leafed through the materials concerning the nobility by himself.

At twenty minutes to three in the afternoon, Klein entered the mysterious space above the gray fog ahead of time.

Inside the vast and ancient palace, he sat down at the seat belonging to The Fool. He conjured the fake World on the opposite side of the mottled bronze table as he familiarized himself with operating The World.

After a few minutes, Klein took out his pocket watch and glanced at it, sending a message to the crimson star that symbolized The Sun to prepare for the gathering.

While he waited, he played with the All-Black Eye and "fitted" it with a silver chain. Then, he wound it around his right wrist and covered it with his sleeve.

At three in the afternoon, rays of light shot out from the palace that resembled a giant's residence. Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun, each projected a blurry silhouette dyed in crimson.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~ Good afternoon..." Audrey was about to greet every member of the Tarot Club when her gaze suddenly fell upon the figure seated at the very end.

It was a stranger wearing a hooded black robe. He was also illusory and hazy.

"This is?" Audrey looked at Mr. Fool with both puzzlement and delight.

Has the Tarot Club grown bigger again?

Is it Fors or Xio? No, the height doesn't match. Is it someone else?

While Audrey was deep in thought, Klein leisurely leaned back and said, "This is a new member, Mr. World."

At the same time, through his gray fog-augmented Spirit Vision, he discovered that the surface color of The Sun's Astral Projection had

become a little purer, but it had yet to reach the standards of Sequence 8. His initial judgment was that The Sun had completely digested the Bard potion.

"Hello," Audrey greeted politely, curiously scrutinizing the new member.

She quickly "read" some of the corresponding details through the hazy fog.

Mr. World is a person who is reserved. He seldom moves and always wears a straight face. I wonder where he's from. Loen? Intis? Or a place as mysterious as the City of Silver? Audrey nodded thoughtfully.

After so many gatherings, she had deduced one thing from the fact that The Sun couldn't engage in their conversations; that was, that he was most likely not speaking the Loen language and that the information that he heard was most likely translated by Mr. Fool.

After The Hanged Man, Alger, and The Sun, Derrick, greeted The World respectively, to which the newcomer gave a rather cold response, Klein looked at Justice and said, "The two candidates you have nominated are still under examination.

"I'll give you a simple task. You can entrust it to them in your name. This is part of the examination."

It should be this strict... Not only was Audrey not disappointed, she even felt that it was only necessary.

The members of the Tarot Club must be strictly selected; not just anyone can become one! She thought proudly before adding in a somewhat guilty tone, *And for me to be pulled in by Mr. Fool at the very beginning shows that I was lucky, and luck is a unique quality as well!*

"Alright, please issue the mission," Audrey gave an affirmative answer.

Klein stretched out his right hand and placed it on the table, showing a picture of Lanevus and his dressing.

“Investigate the man in the painting. He’s in Backlund.” Klein had the portrait appear in front of Miss Justice.

Audrey looked over and saw a young man with neatly combed black hair and round glasses. He had a full forehead.

It was a colored oil painting, with taunting brown eyes that seemed abnormally protruded, and at the bottom were the words “formerly known alias: Lanevus” and other information.

It’s a simple mission, which means that the target isn’t strong... However, there must be something special about him that makes Mr. Fool aware of his existence... Although it’s a simple mission, there might be a deeper purpose behind it... For someone as powerful as him, it shouldn’t just be a test... Audrey momentarily allowed her to throng her mind. Only after a few seconds did she say, “I’ll entrust it to them.”

Hmm... The two ladies seem to have many connections in Backlund which would serve to help in finding Lanevus. After confirming the matters pertaining to his revenge, Klein fell silent, and he deliberately allowed his smurf to take center stage.

The World surveyed the area and spoke with a hoarse voice, “Mr. Fool told me that I can issue missions and gather ingredients here, is that so?”

“Yes,” Audrey elegantly nodded and said. “However, you need to wait patiently. What’s going to happen next is Mr. Fool’s reading time.”

I completed my mission to “assassinate Intis Ambassador Bakerland,” but I didn’t even mention it to occupy this period of time... she thought, raising her chin slightly.

Miss Justice, you really have a great sense of mastership... I’ll have to pay the price of knowledge later so that the assassination of Bakerland can truly come to an end... Klein looked away, amused, and looked over at The Hanged Man.

Alger Wilson didn’t speak blindly because of the appearance of a new member. He remained silent and observed in secret.

At this moment, when he saw Mr. Fool looking at him, he quickly and humbly bowed and said, “This time, there are still six pages. The final page will be given to you next time.” “Sure.” Klein nodded.

The Hanged Man quickly focused his mind, recalled the contents, and expressed them with his mind.

He quickly finished “writing” six pages of the diary and saw them suddenly vanish and appear in Klein’s hands.

Klein looked down and swept through the contents of the first page.

“9th February. I have a third child. I named him Bornova.

“My eldest daughter, Bernadette, was lucky. Her mother and I were just Low-Sequence Beyonders back then. She is free to choose the path she wants to take.

“My eldest son, Ciel, is the most unfortunate. He inherited a minute amount of Beyonder characteristics, but he has to follow my path. Perhaps, he could make changes at Sequence 4, but attaining High Sequences are never easy.

“My second son, Bornova, is in a better situation than Ciel, but still worse than his sister. I have his characteristics equivalent to a Sequence 5 Beyonder. This has reduced the burden on me, allowing me to digest my potion even faster, accelerating my advancement. And when he was just born, he was already showing various traits of an Astromancer.

“Zaratul came to congratulate me in secret and praised Bornova as a lovely angel. I asked this master of divination what he would accomplish in the future. He only smiled and didn’t answer me.

“When I asked him about Ciel’s future, he finally said that death is an inevitable ending, but that might be a good thing.

“Seriously, a Seer’s words are always so vague that it makes one want to pry their mouths open.

“When I finally asked about Bernadette’s future, he suddenly became very serious. He said she would hate me, detest me, turn her back on

me, and she would become an important figure in the mysterious world.

“Sometimes, you really shouldn’t ask about the result of a divination. I find it hard to believe that my adorable and kind Bernadette who cares for her brother, adores her father, and pampers her mother would hate me and betray me. Why would that happen? What excessive act did I do? Maybe she’ll have someone she loves but I’m not satisfied with. Some punk that I’ll end up killing?

“No, Zaratul isn’t a Soothsayer, and the divination he receives might be wrong! Forget it, Roselle!”

I think I smell the scent of some contrived family melodrama... After reading the first page of the diary, Klein couldn’t help but lampoon silently.

At the same time, he naturally recalled what Zaratul had told him about the future of Bernadette: an important figure in the mysterious world.

Was this referring to the world of the Beyonders? What level would someone be deemed an important figure... Klein turned the pages thoughtfully.

“22nd May. Floren of the Sauron family actually wants me to be his subordinate!

“Do I look like someone who would be a lackey? His attitude is simply unacceptable.

“I swear that I’ll one day make him pay the price for his arrogance today.

“However, some of the things he mentioned are very interesting and worth pondering over.”

"Floren said that the history of the Sauron family exceeds two thousand years, making it longer than even the Church of the God of Craftsmanship's history. They witnessed all the cooperation and strife, light and darkness, in the Fourth Epoch, and they have survived until this very day. Other than the Augustus family of Loen, the Einhorn family of Feysac, and the Castiya family of Feynapotter, the other powerful families that have been deemed their equal, such as the Antigonus family and the Zaratul family, have been relegated as vestiges of history, or have turned to nothing but rats in the sewers, hiding from the public as shady existences.

"He said that making me his subordinate—a subordinate of the ancient and glorious Sauron family—is a gift to me.

"Back then, I wanted to f**k all eight generations of his ancestors.

"However, for the Sauron family to have a history exceeding two thousand years is indeed surprising. The Fourth Epoch is known as the Epoch of the Gods. Be it the seven orthodox deities of the present times, or Death, Primordial Demoness, Dark Side of the Universe, and the True Creator, they all remained active in the real world. Legend had it that they frequently did miracles. For the Sauron family to last to this day and enjoy its current high standing, it's definitely not an easy matter.

"Their long history has given them far more than just arrogance. They must be hiding many secrets, and perhaps even extremely terrifying Sealed Artifacts.

"They are truly a colossus that stands tall above the earth, one that people can't look straight at."

Upon reading this, Klein had a lot of ideas.

For Roselle to be able to overthrow the rule of the Sauron family, he must have experienced a horrifying and heart-stirring struggle. Even if the Sauron family didn't have a Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, they definitely had no lack of Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts. Adding to the possibility of having High-Sequence Beyonders, even if the Church of

the God of Steam and Machinery fully supported Roselle, it's unlikely that any good outcome might come out of it... Could it be that before all of that happened, the Sauron family was already beginning to wane and weaken, and the Intis revolution was just an external manifestation of this state?

What did they experience during that period of time?

Did they lose Sealed Artifacts? Did the High-Sequence Beyonders die? Did that attract the attention of many ambitious people?

Hmm... Judging from this diary, the Augustus family of Loen is no stranger to the Antigonus and Zaratul families. Internally, they should have corresponding records.

The Sun had previously mentioned that the City of Silver has endured for more than 2500 years in the Dark Ages. According to my initial judgment, that's the date of the Cataclysm. In the past two hundred years, the Sauron family claimed to have a history spanning more than 2000 years. I wonder if it will extend to the point before the City of Silver... I'll try to find an opportunity to mention the Sauron clan and see The Sun's reaction. If The Sun still has a look of stupefaction, it would indirectly mean that the Sauron family only rose up after the Cataclysm. Perhaps they had benefited greatly from the Cataclysm to become nobles in the Fourth Epoch, and royalty in the Fifth Epoch...

Well, even if the Sun doesn't know, it doesn't prove it completely. Perhaps he didn't learn his history well.

When Klein turned to the third page, he found that the content should've been written in the early days of Roselle's appointment as Consul of the Intis Republic.

From the diary entries on this page, it can be seen that Roselle had developed and promulgated a new Civil Code which encouraged inventions, protected trade, and the incubation of the industrial revolution. It wasn't him merely satisfying his own warped humor of acting as this world's Napoleon and his ambition to change the world. What he did allowed him to reconcile with the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

The Eternal Blazing Sun was also the God of Deeds, the Guardian of Businesses. The closer to the times the Civil Code was and the more prosperous trade was made it more in line with the needs of the church.

Judging from this part of the diary, the relationship between Roselle and the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun was gradually thawing and beginning to improve. When he brazenly claimed the title of Emperor more than ten years later and called himself Caesar, it's likely that he obtained the simultaneous endorsement of the two Churches. Otherwise, it would've been too risky. Then, what resulted in his assassination? Klein cast his gaze at the fourth page in puzzlement.

"11th August. That retard Floren is showing off again.

"He said that he's the most promising member of the Sauron family generation to become a High-Sequence Beyonder because he's very similar to his great-great-grandfather.

"Is there any necessary connection? I looked him up and down, left and right, but I couldn't find any sign of talent.

"Moreover, in the field of Beyonders, is talent important? Well, figuring out the essence to 'acting' can be a core element of talent, but that's not necessary. As long as one knows the acting method and not be stupid enough to misunderstand the meaning, or avoid doing things that easily result in a loss of control, then one has a chance to completely digest the potions. Which is to say, just a bit more time and effort needs to be spent. In one's lifetime, it's not impossible to become a High-Sequence Beyonder.

"The main obstacle to becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder is the difficulty of obtaining Beyonder ingredients and the difficulty of corresponding rituals. Of course, I have to admit that those born as Beyonders have more time to prepare.

"Was Floren's great-great-grandfather a High-Sequence Beyonder? Does looking like him imply talent?"

It can be seen that at the time of writing this diary entry, Roselle was still very young and that he wasn't aware of the two Laws of Beyonder

Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation... Klein nodded indiscernibly.

With his current knowledge, he could probably understand the hidden meaning behind Floren Sauron's words.

A High-Sequence Beyonder's Beyonder characteristic remains contained a spirit mark. This was also one of the reasons why it was easy for people to lose control when concocting potions with this ingredient.

And people who resembled the original owner could avoid this negative influence to the greatest extent. Their chances of success were higher than the average person, so they were considered gifted. How Holy Artifacts recognized their masters probably shared the same conditions.

This achieves the same goal via different approaches as the acting method, but it can't be popularized... Once the advancement is successful, one would still have to do the acting method required of the potion to completely digest its characteristics... While in deep thought, Klein glanced at the two diary entries at the back of the page and discovered how much Emperor Roselle enjoyed the liberalness in Intis, but he was worried that his future wife would be equally liberal.

With the paper making some noise, Klein placed the fifth page at the top.

"20th April. I participated in that ancient organization's secret gathering once again. Those members still leave me shaking. It's hard to believe that they're actually all members of this organization.

"This time, I learned some of the ancient organization's philosophy. They believe that people will always lose some of their individuality bit by bit until they 'sleep.' Hence, by trying hard to observe and remember oneself, one can use the various types of information to achieve the purification needed to face the final end of days.

"They've kept and passed down secrets for thousands or even tens of thousands of years. They believe that dusk is inevitable, and that doomsday cannot be avoided.

“They believe in the original Creator and believe that He is not truly dead. When dusk comes and everything ends, He will wake up from His slumber and let everything return to Him. He will create a new world, a new history.

“All of the actions from this organization stem from this belief. It can be said that they show great animosity to the True Creator. They aren’t stingy with their descriptions to describe Him as fallen and evil.

“They wield the second Blasphemy Slate and the twenty-two paths of the divine, but they only allow members to choose a few of them, with the exception of those who were already Beyonders when they joined.

“Are there any secrets to these pathways?

“I’ll first jot it down and analyze it in the future. These pathways are Bard, Sailor, Reader, and Spectator.

“Haha, I have to change my habits of calling these Sequence pathways in the future. Using those names in that ancient organization makes me appear quite uneducated.

This is very similar to what I’ve analyzed from my hostile relations and from Mr. A’s request, with it being very similar to how the Bard, Sailor, Reader, and Secrets Suppliant pathways can be exchanged at Sequence 4... Is Manipulator a High Sequence of the Spectator pathway? Why do many secret organizations declare that the apocalypse would definitely befall us one day? For example, the Demoness Sect, this ancient organization, and they themselves do not rely on this to proselytize. Is it a requirement for brainwashing or would there really be a so-called dusk? Klein thought of many things, but due to a lack of information, he was unable to come to a definite answer.

At the same time, he couldn’t help but silently lampoon, *Roselle, can’t you just write down the name of that organization?*

Resisting the changes in his expression and body movements, Klein turned to the last page which had relatively little content and read.

“1st Jan. A beginning of a new year. I happened to finish my first Card of Blasphemy.

“I will hide the ultimate secret of the twenty-two paths of the divine in these different Cards of Blasphemy and scatter them across the world. If things fail, they’ll be the best insurance that my children can fall back onto.

“Haha, I’ll disrupt the order they wish to have and spread the profound mysteries of the divine!

“These Cards of Blasphemy will possess characteristics of being anti-divination and anti-prophecy. Apart from the ones I’m giving my children, the fated ones will receive it!

“I’m a person who makes sure to square accounts when it comes to grudges, and after I die, who cares if floods deluge the heavens! Oh, I didn’t create that sentence.

“In short, the more chaotic the world is, the better it is!

“I have to consider how to name the Cards of Blasphemy that will form a set. The paths of the divine number twenty-two. The Major Arcana tarot cards also have twenty-two cards. They can match quite well, but there are a few that don’t meet the requirements. I need to make some changes to match the original potion names.

“That ancient organization is my last and biggest insurance. I don’t know if they’ll support me, or the manner in which they’ll support me in.

“I still remember the shock when I first saw the Blasphemy

Slate.”

“So it turns out that the Beyonder pathways are paths of the divine. It really is true that the Blasphemy Slate is blaspheming the deities.

“Above every pathway’s Sequence 1, there is still a Sequence 0! And there’s a corresponding potion and ritual!

“Each pathway can only have one Sequence 0!

“And Sequence 0 is the Sequence of a True God!

“For example, Sequence 0, Sun!”

Sequence 0?

There's still a Sequence 0 above Sequence 1?

Sequence 0 is equivalent to a True God?

There can only be one Sequence 0 per pathway? Is this the true meaning of the paths of the divine?

As long as one consumes the corresponding potion, does a ritual, and grasps the acting method to digest the Beyonder characteristic, an ordinary person can become a god one step at a time?

This is truly blasphemous...

Could the main ingredients of the final potion be the godhood, divine blood, and body of the Eternal Blazing Sun?

...

The information on the diary's last page was filled with so much information that Klein almost couldn't think. He almost made additional body movements.

The twenty-two paths of the divine correspond to the twenty-two Sequence 0s... Sequence 0, Sun does sound very powerful...

Perhaps, there's a Sequence 0, Death? I wonder what the names corresponding to the Goddess and the Lord of the Storms are... According to Emperor Roselle's description, some of these cards are identical to the Major Arcana tarot cards, but some of them are different. The Cards of Blasphemy he created were standardized with the names of the potions... These can no longer be called potions...

Could the reason that the Emperor regretted not choosing the Seer, Apprentice, Marauder pathways be because their corresponding Sequence 0s have yet to appear?

Then what was the reason for the sudden personification of the Hidden Sage who was symbolically a deity?

What was Roselle plotting in the end? It feels like he became the enemy of everyone in the world, and that only seems possible if it was set into motion by that mysterious and ancient organization...

The Primordial Demoness is the name of Sequence 0 for the Demoness pathway?

Klein gradually found his train of thought, and he restrained the turmoil that was going through his mind.

He knew that he couldn't lose himself in this matter. He had to recover as quickly as possible; otherwise, Justice and The Hanged Man would discover something amiss and find it odd.

Mr. Fool has been reading that page too long!

I really want to obtain one of the Cards of Blasphemy that Emperor Roselle created. I want to know what else there is—other than the godhood-providing potion formulas and the corresponding rituals... Klein suppressed his shock and puzzlement and made Roselle's diary disappear from his hands.

He rapped the corner of the bronze table and looked to the side.

"Miss Justice, well done. You finished Bakerland in less than a week.

"According to the agreement, what kind of payment do you want?"

Bakerland is dead? That fast? Alger had left the islands in the past few days and hadn't received the appropriate information. He was astonished for a moment which made Audrey, who was secretly observing him, feel delighted.

Even if Alger was in the in the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity, Bayam, he might not have been informed in a timely fashion. After all, cable telegraph could only transmit limited information. Unless it was particularly urgent or important, there was always a delay of a few days. Sometimes, it would even take the colonists of the Rorsted Archipelago a month or two to get an update on the "latest" situation in the Northern Continent.

Restraining his thoughts, The Hanged Man looked at Mr. Fool in the thick fog and respectfully said with a hint of humility, “I’m very sorry. I just managed to contact someone and couldn’t help.”

“This is a commission, not a help request. Don’t worry about it.” Klein chuckled. He turned his gaze back to Miss Justice, waiting for her to say what she wanted in return.

May the Goddess bless me. Please don’t let Miss Justice’s request be too difficult. It’s best if I can repay her with knowledge... I’ve learned quite a lot of amazing things from Roselle’s diary... Klein silently prayed to the Goddess.

Of course, he was very clear that with the gray fog separating them, the Evernight Goddess definitely wouldn’t be able to hear his prayers.

Audrey’s eyes darted around as she thought for a few seconds.

Be honest and not greedy, Audrey, and stick to your principles! She gave a faint smile and said, “No, I’m actually the one still owing you. No—I owe your Blessed the bounty.

“Vice Admiral Qilangos’s bounty was worth a total of 30,000 pounds. I should give your Blessed 15,000 pounds. Killing Bakerland cost 10,000 pounds, so I still need to pay an additional 5000 pounds. However, due to the matter with Bakerland, my finances are recently quite tight. I can only pay this bounty in a few months. Mr. Fool, is that alright?”

After she finished speaking, Audrey quietly exhaled. She felt that the little stone pressing against her heart was finally gone.

Although discussing money and calculating the payment in front of Mr. Fool feels somewhat inappropriate, I can’t hide the rewards I received from his Blessed... Audrey sighed silently.

As for the huge plantation worth more than eight thousand pounds, it was a private form of gratitude from Duke Negan and not a bounty.

5000 pounds? I can get another 5000 pounds? Qilangos’s total bounty actually reached 30,000 pounds! Klein was startled.

Immediately, he fell into an intense mental struggle.

I'm supposed to pay this bounty to Mr. Azik, but I won't be able to get in touch with him for a long time... Putting the money aside would be a waste... I might as well use this money to enhance myself. When the time comes, I'll repay him by providing help... Klein made up his mind three seconds later as he lightly nodded at Miss Justice.

"Sure."

Upon hearing Mr. Fool's response, Audrey's graceful seating posture remained the same, but her heart was completely relaxed.

At that moment, Klein leaned back in his chair and fell silent. Then, he manipulated his smurf secretly from a commandeering position.

The World coughed and said, "Can I speak now?"

Audrey looked at Mr. Fool and seeing that he didn't say a thing, she nodded slightly and said, "Sure."

At the same time, she once again did a read on the new member, The World, and made a judgment.

When I mentioned that the assassination of Ambassador Bakerland was a result of my commissioning, he didn't show any shock or surprise. He either doesn't know the importance of the matter, not understanding the importance of an ambassador, or he's someone who can keep his calm and is good at hiding his emotions and bodily movements... The way he mouths his words doesn't match what he says. It should've been translated by Mr. Fool as well, which makes it impossible for me to get his original vocal tics, or know what language he usually uses... Thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind before Mr. World's hoarse voice sounded.

"I wish to obtain the true root of a Mist Treant, at least 60 milliliters of its juice, as well as the Spring of the Elves marrow crystals and the complete spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther.

"Which one of you can provide it, or provide any relevant clues?

"What do you wish to exchange them for?"

Klein added the Beyonder ingredient needed by the Apothecary to his commission so that the Tarot Club members wouldn't be able to guess the main ingredients of the formula he wanted.

Before Justice and The Hanged Man could react, The Sun who had been silent the entire time finally opened his mouth and said, "I know where Mist Treants are and I can help you obtain the materials. However, I must wait until I finish my advancement and have sufficient strength to join the corresponding patrol team."

Recently, he had been accumulating merit points and rewards. He was working hard to obtain the main ingredients for the Light Suppliant through the City of Silver's officials and private markets. He was still lacking quite a bit.

As expected of the dangerous City of Silver with its numerous monsters... Klein silently commented in admiration, allowing The World to ask, "Then what do you wish to receive in exchange?"

Without hesitation, Derrick replied, "A weapon that suits me and can increase my combat strength."

The reason why he didn't mention the corresponding ingredients for Light Suppliant was because City of Silver had them all. They could be obtained through his own hard work.

Upon hearing this request, Klein immediately thought of the inscribed steel sword that had appeared at the Beyonder gathering organized by the elderly gentleman, Eye of Wisdom.

It was sharp enough, had the effect of exorcism and purification, and could be used for three years. It was valued at 500 pounds, perfectly matching The Sun's described requirements.

Why didn't you say so earlier... It has already been bought by someone else... Klein silently stared at the members, while The World nodded and said, "I will find a weapon that meets your requirements as soon as possible. Is this transaction to be witnessed by Mr. Fool?"

Klein nodded slightly to express his agreement.

At that moment, Audrey shot a glance at The Sun and warned him.

“Apart from the Mist Treant’s juice, Mr. World’s requested ingredients correspond to a Sequence 7. The rough price is about 500-700 pounds.”

She felt that The Sun was too naive and was worried that he would be cheated by the unreadable Mr. World with cheap weapons.

Although Mr. Fool is impartial and advocates fair equal exchange, it’s not his place to stop it if both sides agree. After all, some items are of low value but there are people who are in urgent need, so adding a premium to the price is very normal... Audrey thought to herself.

“A Sequence 7 formula is about 800 pounds,” Alger added.

He had an instinctive aversion towards new members.

Klein translated with great difficulty, for he didn’t know what the currency unit of the pound corresponded to in the City of Silver, and could only use a Series 9 potion formula as a unit.

“I understand.” Derrick slightly nodded, and then quietly added, “...Thank you.”

The World maintained his silent and staid temperament and didn’t comment on what had just happened. He turned to Justice and The Hanged Man, waiting for their response.

Audrey thought for a few seconds and said, “Potion formula for Psychiatrist and their corresponding Beyonder ingredients. Uh... That’s Sequence 7 of the Spectator pathway.

“You can gather the information first, and there’s no rush to purchase them. Once I have clues regarding the Dark Patterned Black Panther and Spring of the Elves marrow crystals, we can proceed. Uh... if you are willing to exchange it for gold pounds, you can buy it at any time.”

Although I’m out of money recently, I can still raise quite a bit if it’s urgent... Audrey comforted herself.

Alger said in a deep voice, “Potion formula of the Sailor pathway’s Sequence 6 Wind-blessed. This will be more expensive than the Beyonder ingredients that you want—combined.

"If you find it, you can think of the additional payment needed to make up for the difference.

"I can't guarantee that I'll be able to help you gather those ingredients. Even if it's just one of them, you don't need to expend any resources ahead of time."

Eh, Mr. Hanged Man should have a close relationship with the Church of Storms... He should be able to get the Wind-blessed formula normally, right? Is he trying to hide the fact that he's digesting the Seafarer potion quickly? Klein was startled.

"Alright," The World answered in a low voice and then said, "I have another request."

The World looked around and said, “I want to get information about all the abject nobles in the Loen Kingdom, including their current addresses. The more details, the better.”

He didn’t directly mention Baronet Pound since Detective Sherlock Moriarty was currently handling an investigation regarding an underground structure that involved the Pound family.

Klein didn’t want Justice to “figure out” The World’s identity through this connection.

I can’t ignore any details! He emphasized to himself.

Audrey stared blankly upon hearing that. She once again examined the member at the end of the long bronze table and probed, “What do you want to do?”

The World laughed with a hoarse voice. “That’s not something you need to worry about. I’m only searching for some things. I won’t do them any harm. I can swear on this point and allow Mr. Fool to bear witness.”

Mr. World is really good at controlling his body language... Is his Sequence the nemesis of a Spectator or Telepathist? Audrey thoughtfully nodded and said, “I know some information about abject aristocrats, but it’s not sufficiently detailed, concrete, or comprehensive. I need some time to gather all of it. It’ll take three or four days, is that okay?”

As a noble, it was compulsory to have some knowledge about people in the same class. Audrey would always hear interesting stories when she attended various balls, banquets, and saloons, but they would all be fragmented and could hardly be considered a comprehensive body of knowledge. After all, she wasn’t an expert in this field, and she still needed to fill in the details by flipping through books, asking around, and checking references to not miss any abject nobles.

“No problem.” The World laughed deeply. “Then, what payment would you like in return? The things I can pay you with right now are some secret history from the Fourth Epoch, knowledge of some

Beyonder pathways, and a few formulas. But frankly, I don't think that information concerning abject nobles is worth Sequence 7 or 8 potions. Heh, if you have any other requests, I can attempt to complete them."

It's not of equal value to Sequence 8 or 7 potion formulas, which means I'm unable to make a corresponding request for the Psychiatrist formula... Audrey began to ponder seriously.

During this process, she sneaked a glance at Mr. Fool, hoping for a hint, only to discover that Mr. Fool was shrouded in the gray fog and had no reaction whatsoever. He was like a god staring at the land beneath him.

Alright... Audrey finally made a decision and smiled.

"I want to hear about knowledge regarding other Beyonder pathways, but this is on the premise that I'm not aware of them."

"Dear Mr. Fool, can you be the judge for this?"

"Yes," Klein answered calmly.

"Then, let's have a private conversation." Audrey looked at The World.

At that moment, Klein rapped the table, isolating The Sun and The Hanged Man from hearing or seeing the exchange.

He deliberately nodded to his smurf, indicating that they could begin their private conversation.

The World looked at Miss Justice and spoke with his usual hoarse voice, "Do you know anything about the Demoness Sect?"

Audrey recalled the information she paid The Hanged Man Alger 1000 pounds for and answered briefly with caution, "I know what they believe in and what era they began from, as well as the Beyonder pathways they control and the inclination of their upper echelons."

The World laughed hoarsely and said, "I understand. You don't know much.

"The Demoness Sect controls the Assassin pathway. The

Sequence 8 is Instigator."

"That's what I know," Audrey said, partially to inform The World, and partially to show her anticipation.

The World raised his hand and stroked his chin before saying, "Then, do you know the corresponding Sequence 7?"

Audrey shook her head slightly. "I'll be very happy to hear it from you."

"The Assassin pathway's Sequence 7 is called Witch," The World said simply.

"Witch?" Audrey jumped in fright at this word. She naturally made the corresponding connections in her mind. "Then, i-if a man consumes this potion, how is he supposed to act?"

Wearing beautiful dresses and putting on exquisite makeup, imitating a lady's every move? She was a little disgusted, yet strangely amused as the thought came to her.

"No, Miss Justice. When a man consumes this potion, he will no longer be considered a male. He will become a true lady." Klein resisted the urge to chortle as he controlled The World's response.

"Goddess, the Witch potion can change a person's sex?" Audrey blurted out.

This... this is really unbelievable! Mr. Fool didn't deny it, which means it's true! This is simply a miracle! This is the mysterious Beyonder world. This is a world filled with all sorts of inexplicable things! This is the world I long for! W-why am I feeling a little excited... After calming down a little, Audrey quickly and guiltily glanced at Mr. Fool and made a tiny confession that she had actually chanted the name of the Evernight Goddess in front of Him.

The World said in a low, hoarse voice, "Yes, but it can only make men become women. Women will accordingly have their charms enhanced. Whether it's their appearance or skin condition, they will become significantly improved, on the basis of their original looks. This is the reason why the upper echelons of the Demoness Sect are all women."

"Then, what flaws does it have?" Audrey suddenly felt her interest was aroused.

The World answered in an unhurried manner, “The requirement for their ‘acting’ is to become evil doers who bring about calamity, disease, and pain.”

Audrey exhaled slightly and felt a little disappointed.

Her mind whirled quickly, and she immediately had a new question.

“If, and I’m saying if—an animal consumes the Witch formula without dying or losing control, would the enhancement of its charms be more suited to human tastes, or focused on charms for its own species? For example, a female cat which makes all male cats and all cat lovers become fanatical towards it?”

The World was momentarily unsure how to respond. After a few seconds, he said, “I’ve never studied such matters.”

Before Audrey could ask further, he added, “The corresponding Sequence 6 for the Witch pathway is Pleasure, or the Demoness of Pleasure. The requirement for ‘acting’ is to bring pleasure to both men and women, mainly in that aspect, as well as controlling or influencing them. The demonesses of this Sequence are very good at using special spider silk.”

Audrey gaped her beautiful mouth, then she silently closed it again, deeply regretting her pinings from before.

“By knowing such information, it will allow you to effectively identify Demonesses. Heh heh, are you pleased with this payment?” The World asked.

Audrey nodded gently and said, “It helps me a lot. Um... the deal is completed. I will help you gather information on the abject nobles as soon as possible. Shall I give it to you the next time we meet?”

The World thought for a moment and asked, “Can it be faster?”

“Then, I’ll offer the information I gathered to Mr. Fool and request that ‘He’ bestow them to you. Mr. Fool, is that okay?” Audrey turned her head and asked.

In the thick gray fog, Klein nodded his head in agreement.

At the same time, he busily controlled The World to whisper,

"'He?'"

He detected the different way she said the word.

Noticing The World's astonishment, the corners of Audrey' s mouth curled up slightly, her eyes rolling upwards as she intentionally didn't make any explanation.

Klein rapped the long bronze table, indicating the end of the private exchange.

Then, he once again manipulated The World to say, "I have one more problem."

This newcomer has indeed accumulated a lot of requests... Audrey looked over, unsurprised.

Alger and Derrick both indicated they were listening through their body language.

The World said hoarsely, "I want to know if there are any more High-Sequence Beyonders in the Sauron family in Intis."

While The World spoke, Klein looked at The Sun through the corners of his eye and saw that the youth didn't have any additional reaction.

From the looks of it, the City of Silver doesn't have records of the Sauron family... This family most likely made an uprising after the Cataclysm... Klein looked around thoughtfully and discovered Justice and The Hanged Man looking at each other, obviously unaware of the answer. The Sun was undoubtedly at a loss and silent.

Thus, he lightly tapped the table again and said, "Let me answer this question. What can you pay for it?"

Before he could finish his sentence, Klein hurriedly controlled The World to say, "A formula, a Sequence 7 formula."

"Okay. Deal." Klein created an environment for a private exchange as he silently stared at his smurf for a few seconds.

Audrey and Alger, who were blocked, once again felt how unfathomable Mr. Fool was. They were both curious about the answer,

but they also felt that it was of no use to them. It wasn't worth it to spend a Sequence 7 potion formula in exchange for that.

After the private exchange, Klein deliberately made The World bow and say in a hoarse voice, "Honorable Mr. Fool, thank you for your answer; it was very helpful to me."

"This is an equivalent exchange; there's no need to thank me." Klein endured the goosebumps that suddenly surfaced on his skin as he answered indifferently.

The open communication that followed lasted less than ten minutes. Then, he announced the end of Tarot Gathering before severing the connections with the crimson stars.

After the figures of Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Sun dissipated into streams of light, Klein looked at The World and chuckled.

With a smurf, a lot of things are really much more convenient.

Unfortunately, the All-Black Eye cannot be used outside the gray fog. What a pity.

As he thought that, he controlled The World to stand up and bow, then he let it melt into the majestic palace.

As he had to divert some of his attention in order to control his smurf, Klein had expended a great deal of his spirituality. He didn't continue staying in that space, and after retrieving the AllBlack Eye and placing it behind the bronze table, he immediately returned to the real world.

At that moment, there was a rare case of Backlund sunshine, seen in autumn or winter, behind the tightly shut curtains.

Klein didn't have the time to take in this view. He slept for half an hour to recover some of his energy.

After waking up, due to having gained Miss Justice's promise and the fact that it wasn't urgent, he had no plans on searching for information at the library, and instead, decided to head to one of the many cemetery sites on the outskirts of Backlund before nightfall.

Klein was going to test the influence of Azik's copper whistle to understand its scope and limitations!

Of course, the experiment would only be carried out after dark. The reason why he was heading out now was that it would be very strange and very eye-catching to hire a carriage to visit a cemetery in the evening.

Chapter 268: The Cemetery and the Hospital

When the steam metro arrived at the southern bank of the Tussock River, Klein rented a carriage and headed to the Aston Cemetery on the outskirts of the South Borough, which was managed by the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

Under the darkness of dusk, the trees around the cemetery seemed to bare their fangs and brandish their claws, blocking out the light like monsters lurking in the darkness.

After the carriage driver took the 4 soli Klein paid, he looked at the cemetery and muttered, "Do you need me to wait here for you?"

"No, there's no need. I'm here to visit a friend." Klein came up with an excuse, and he immediately noticed the change in the driver's face.

This is a cemetery... to visit a friend with the sky already dark... The driver could hear his own heart thumping.

Klein jolted to his senses, smiled, and added, "He's the tomb keeper here."

The carriage driver was immediately relieved, but he didn't dare stay. He quickly drove the horses and left.

Klein circled the graveyard until the night truly set in.

After dark, the smoke and dust emissions decreased by a lot. In addition to the biting cold wind, the fog in the air thinned a lot. Although few stars could be seen, the crimson moon made a furtive appearance, covering the ground with a veil-like glow.

Klein tapped his chest four times clockwise, drawing out the crimson moon. Then, he put on his gloves, pushed himself over the iron fence, and entered the cemetery.

He looked around with a high degree of caution, randomly found a secluded corner, took out Azik's copper whistle, and held it in his hand.

Not far in front of him was a tombstone. The photograph on it was dirty, and the epitaph appeared extremely blurry in the moonlight. Klein carefully read it for a few seconds before figuring out what they were.

“Friend, if you are passing by, help me up. Thanks!”

A very humorous gentleman... I choose you! Klein stopped, leaned back against the trees that sheltered the grave from the sun and rain, and waited patiently in the cold, chilly night.

He threw Azik’s copper whistle up before catching it firmly, repeating it several times to pass the time until twenty minutes later.

No signs of the dead coming back to life... Klein clicked his pocket watch shut, surveyed his surroundings, and confirmed the results.

I’ll come back here in two days to see if there are any additional changes. If there are none, it means that Mr. Azik’s copper whistle won’t be able to affect corpses that have been laid to rest through a priest’s ritual. Klein silently muttered to himself, and he put the ancient and exquisite copper whistle back into his pocket.

There were three kinds of burials in the Loen Kingdom. The first type had coffins and corpses, suitable for the middle and upper classes living in abundance. The second type was the ones without corpses, so a cremation was held. The remaining ashes were placed in urns. This was the choice of the lower middle class and technical workers who could pay for the cremation but found coffins to be too wasteful. But there were also times when religious and governmental factors had an impact, such as the believers of the Eternal Blazing Sun. The majority of them underwent cremation, and the poor people only needed to pay a small fee for the cremation due to the help they received from the government.

The third only belonged to the poor. They couldn’t afford coffins, and they didn’t wish for cremation, so they just wrapped the corpses up and buried them.

But Klein had already determined from the tombstones and tombs that the target of his experiment was the kind which involved a coffin and a corpse.

If Azik’s copper whistle really can cause the dead to rise, even if the target had rotted into a pile of bones, there shouldn’t be a complete

lack of reaction. Even if the lid of the coffin cannot be opened, it should've at least created a dull thud.

As he walked towards the fence, Klein suddenly thought of a non-rigorous part of the experiment.

Yes, I need to categorize them. The corpses here have been buried for quite a while. I should find a target that was recently buried.

Only by doing so will I be able to arrive at the most accurate conclusion.

After that, Klein basically played a game of cat-and-mouse with the cemetery guardians before finding a grave that had completed a burial ceremony during the day.

This time, he waited for half an hour, but he still didn't find anything abnormal.

Phew, I can basically determine that Mr. Azik's copper whistle can't affect a corpse that has undergone a ritual that puts the soul to rest. That's quite weak, no—that's not right. This copper whistle isn't meant to cause the dead to come alive. It's used to summon messengers, so affecting a corpse is a negative effect! Klein tightened his double-breasted coat and walked toward the iron fence.

He planned on heading home to have a change of clothes before trying out his second experiment.

The target of the second experiment group were the recently deceased corpses that haven't been laid to rest via a ritual.

Such targets often existed in a hospital's morgue!

Climbing over the fence, Klein made his way back to the South Borough on foot in the dreary, dark night. The surroundings were deathly still and quiet. Only the evergreen, dust covered trees lightly swayed.

It reminded him of the night he had been resurrected from the dead. Back then, he too had to walk from the cemetery to the city.

Sigh... Klein sighed and suddenly began to run, as if trying to get rid of the melancholy that filled him.

More than half an hour later, he rented a carriage in South Borough and headed for the nearest steam metro station.

There was still about an hour before the metro stopped running, and this could save him quite a bit of money.

...

In the wee hours of the morning, Klein changed into a grayishblue worker's uniform and wore a cap as he made his way to St. Estin's Hospital in the Backlund Bridge area.

This was a charity hospital belonging to the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery.

Many of the poor died here due to illness, and since there was nowhere for them to place their bodies, they had to be kept in the hospital morgue. There, the corpses awaited cremation from the government or be donated to the medical schools. This phenomenon was very common in summer, but there weren't many in the autumn or winter after it cooled down.

However, in an era without air-conditioning or equipment to keep the temperature cool, the hospital's morgue couldn't keep the corpses for too long. Donated bodies would be quickly embalmed and bodies to be buried the next day would be cleaned up. Of course, these were the rules enforced in summer. In autumn and winter, the rules were relatively relaxed; therefore, there were still many corpses left overnight in the morgue during this period.

The morgue at St. Estin was underground. It was relatively cool, even during the summer, and was biting cold during autumn and winter.

Based on what he had learned as a Nighthawk, Klein relied on a Clown's agility and balance to sneak into the basement while avoiding the doctors and nurses that were on duty.

Before he even got close to the morgue, he felt a chill down his spine.

After quickly moving past the janitor's room, Klein took out a piece of wire and lightly unlocked the door to the morgue.

This was one of the methods of infiltration and tracking!

He slowly and silently pushed open the door to the morgue with his black-gloved right hand. At the same time, he cloaked Azik's copper whistle in his spirituality to determine if such a method could eliminate the negative effects.

The temperature in the morgue seemed to be lower than the corridor. Most of the corpses were bagged up and placed in different iron cabinets. Only a few were placed on the long table in the central open space, as if they were awaiting examination.

As a Sequence 8 Clown, Klein was no longer afraid of such scenes. He just instinctively felt uncomfortable.

Carefully, he closed the door and walked around the long tables.

After about ten minutes, Klein let out a breath of cold air and confirmed that none of the corpses had come to life.

It's about time... He took out his gold pocket watch and opened it.

When he was ready, Klein withdrew his spirituality and stopped enveloping Azik's copper whistle.

He wasn't sure if it was a psychological effect, but he had a baffling feeling that the surroundings had become even more silent.

As a Seer, he fully believed in his instincts. He stopped pacing back and forth and retreated towards the door.

Time ticked by, and Klein determined that it took about two minutes.

At that moment, a corpse on a long table suddenly sat up!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The surrounding iron cabinets emitted a series of banging noises, as though all hell was about to break loose!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Upon hearing such a commotion and seeing the corpses sit up, Klein suddenly said in a low voice, "Crimson!" Immediately following that, he injected his spirituality into a Requiem Charm and threw it out.

Icy-blue flames burned quietly, and serene and gentle blackness spread out. The corpses lay down once again, and the banging sounds coming from the cabinets came to an abrupt halt.

Klein, who had experienced a similar situation, didn't relax and used another Requiem Charm.

As there were many corpses around him, he used a third charm to be safe, using up everything that he had.

Not bad... Indeed, it only affects corpses that haven't been put to rest via a ritual. This includes corpses that haven't been dead for too long and zombies. Using my spirituality to shield the whistle can prevent such effects. Klein thought with a smile.

Seeing that none of the corpses were making any abnormal reactions, he prepared to open the door and leave.

At that moment, he suddenly heard footsteps coming from the outside and saw a faint light seeping in.

The elderly janitor had been attracted by the banging sound in the morgue. He was approaching with a lantern in hand!

Klein looked around, placing his hand on the door, he nimbly jumped up, stopping at the spot between the door and the ceiling.

His fingers dug into the bumps and cracks as he maintained perfect balance.

Creak!

The elderly janitor opened the door with his key and entered the morgue.

He took a few steps forward, held up his lantern, and examined the iron cabinets and long tables, as well as the corpses.

Behind him, Klein nimbly jumped down and landed silently.

Seizing the opportunity, Klein quickly escaped from the morgue. He used the janitor's room to hide for a few seconds before carefully returning to the upper floor.

After the elderly janitor surveyed the surroundings and didn't find anything out of the ordinary, he mumbled a sentence, in fear of the corpses, and quickly left. He locked the door and didn't stay any longer.

Returning to the guardroom, he wrapped a thin blanket around himself and took several minutes to calm his racing heart before mumbling to himself in a low voice, "Those old guys always tell me about the weird things that happen in the morgue, hoping to scare me. Those weird sounds just now should count as well. It doesn't matter. Those corpses didn't come back to life either!

"Pui, there are no such things as zombies and wraiths!"

At the same time, Klein was walking comfortably along the quiet, dark streets, happy to be free of a latent threat.

He looked at the elegant gas lamps that lined the sides of the street and looked forward to the future Beyonder gatherings.

As long as he obtained a weapon with a special effect, he would be able to obtain one of the main ingredients of a Magician!

Hmm... Although I don't have much money right now, I still have a lot of assets that I can use to exchange. For example, the Telepathist potion formula, or the formulas for Bard and Light Suppliant. Furthermore, my Clown potion is digesting at a faster rate than I expected due to series of events and my discovery of the essence needed for "acting." It's close to being completely digested... Along the streets of Backlund at night, Klein left his mind wandering.

Chapter 269: Clues to the Psychology Alchemists

On the outskirts of Empress Borough, in a wide, empty horse track.

Audrey Hall deliberately led a chestnut mare to a corner and pretended to discuss something with Viscount Glaint.

She was wearing white pants and knee-high black boots, adorned with a simple blouse and a black jacket that reached her waist. In addition, she donned a helmet of the same color. She looked especially valiant and beautiful, and Susie, her golden retriever, was obediently sitting by her feet. What seemed like a tiny leather satchel hung from her back.

Disguised as Viscount Glaint's servant, Xio glanced enviously at Audrey's long, straight legs, and unconsciously tiptoed.

"Just horse-riding is so blasé. Only when it is combined with hunting does it become imbued with life. Of course, I mean the equestrian skills for men. No matter what a beautiful lady does, it would still be a sight to behold," Glaint sized up Audrey and said half-jokingly.

Audrey replied with a slight smile, "The next hunt is still months away."

Every year, from June to the New Year, the aristocrats of the Loen Kingdom would come to Backlund to attend various banquets, dances, and salons, as per tradition. This was a very important event for them, and many things would be decided within a few months.

After the new year, the nobles would return to their fiefdom— their castles, country estates, and large plantations—and spend their leisure time there. In such times, the most popular sport was hunting.

The nobles would invite guests of similar status to enjoy the pleasure of horse-riding and chasing prey. As long as their financial situation allowed it, they weren't stingy with buying hounds.

The most famous of the hounds was the foxhound.

"I already miss that life. Backlund is a place where people feel constrained, and its air is indescribably terrible. Of course, I still enjoy

its extravagance." Viscount Glaint wore his gloves and stepped back to make it easier for Audrey to talk to Xio and Fors.

"Honorable Miss Audrey, why have you called us here this time?" Xio initiated the question as she retracted her gaze.

Audrey took a large portion of most of her recent income. She was honest and generous, a rarely encountered good employer.

I seem to smell the ink of money again... Hopefully, the mission wouldn't be too difficult... Miss Audrey is perfect in every way, except for one thing. Every mission is unexpected and very dangerous... Xio thought, feeling both anticipation and apprehension. She couldn't help but glance sideways at Fors. She noticed that her companion, disguised as a maid, was looking right at her.

The expressions reflected in their eyes looked very similar.

Audrey held her gloves, smiled reservedly and elegantly before saying, "It's a simple request this time."

As she spoke, she motioned with her eyes for Xio and Fors to open the leather satchel on Susie.

Xio, who had always been known for her proactiveness, immediately took two steps forward and bent down to reach out with her hand.

During this short period of time, she had originally wanted to pat Susie's head to show that she meant no harm. But just as she extended her right palm, Susie had already turned her head, turning her body half around, placing the small leather satchel in front of her.

I'm usually popular with animals... For example, mosquitoes... Xio kept her expression unchanged as she unzipped the satchel and took out a stack of papers from Susie's leather pouch.

She stood up and took a look at the stack of papers. She saw that it depicted a young man with ordinary looks, but his neatly combed hair, round glasses, and mocking brown eyes all looked very familiar to her.

I must've seen him somewhere! Xio looked down and saw the corresponding description.

"Formerly used name: Lanevus, wanted swindler."

I know where I've seen him before! Xio was suddenly enlightened and almost made an inelegant gesture of slapping her forehead.

Before she met Audrey, one of the main sources of her income was flipping through newspapers, researching wanted posters, and using her connections in many gangs in East Borough to seek out criminals who were worth fat bounties.

I had thought of finding this Lanevus, who has a bounty of 100 pounds. Besides, he swept away more than 10,000 pounds in cash! However, I've recently been too busy with Miss Audrey's requests and had forgotten about this matter... Xio and Fors looked at each other and then asked frankly, "How much is this request worth?"

How much is the request worth? Audrey was startled for a moment.

She had completely forgotten the matter of payment, as from her point of view, it was a test from Mr. Fool.

When were examinees ever given money?

"Uh... 100 pounds?" Audrey deliberated and gave a number.

"Deal!" Xio and Fors answered in unison.

If we can catch him, not only would we receive a hundred pounds from Miss Audrey, but we can also obtain an equal amount from the bounty... What a great mission! Xio asked casually, her eyes shining,

"Why are you looking for this swindler? Did he swindle you of your money?"

I don't even know who he is... It's really a simple request. A hundred pounds was enough to complete the deal... There's no need to tell Mr. Fool about this. It's only a hundred pounds... Audrey, with a polite smile, ignored Xio's question and instead mentioned, "I received word that he's in Backlund.

"Ah yes, there are a dozen or so portraits here, different portraits. I took into account that Lanevus must have disguised himself, so I'm giving you pictures of him without glasses, with a beard, with a change of hairstyle. Uh... pictures based on conjectures."

I'm also very good at drawing and painting! Audrey tilted her chin.

Xio immediately forgot her previous question and said in pleasant surprise, “This is really good news!”

She felt as though she could already see the bounty of two hundred pounds beckoning at her.

The mysterious person she had met at Mr. A’s gathering had yet to establish contact with her. Therefore, all she could do was continue with her business of earning money.

Audrey nodded indiscernibly. She muttered, “Do you have any leads on the matter regarding the Psychology Alchemists?”

Fors adjusted her long curly hair, looked at Viscount Glaint who was listening to the side, and said, “I recently joined a new Beyonder gathering. Rumor has it that the Spectator and Telepathist potion formulas have previously appeared there. I’m suspecting that one of the members from the gathering is from the Psychology Alchemists.

“I’ll apply to bring you with me the next gathering.” “Alright.” Audrey deliberately didn’t hide her joy.

She had read their true state of mind from the colors, body language, and the subtle expressions of Xio and Fors, to judge their enthusiasm for the mission. They didn’t lie regarding the Psychology Alchemists either.

Viscount Glaint mumbled, “Audrey’s matters seems to be on the brink of success. Where’s my formula, Audrey?”

“There are really no clues as of yet. The Apothecary pathway is mostly in the south, where the Feynapotter Kingdom is.” Fors gestured with deep regret.

“Alright, I’m still young. I’m only in my early twenties. I still have time to wait,” Glaint replied in a humorous tone.

“Alright, thank you for your help. See you again next time.” Audrey bowed gracefully, wore her gloves, and mounted her horse as she rode down the track.

Susie happily followed, as if she had found new entertainment.

...

As he spent the night "experimenting," it was already 9:34 of a Tuesday morning by the time Klein woke up.

Biting into a piece of bread slathered with butter, he wore his coat and hat, hurried out the door, and wrote on the message book hanging by the doorbell's pull rope:

"Owner is out and will be back after five in the afternoon."

Actually, he didn't have much to do. It was purely to guard against a sudden visit from Millet Carter.

If the other party found out that the detective he hired for a full fifty pounds wasn't out and about, searching for information or organizing people to confirm the layout of the structure, and was instead at home leisurely drinking tea and reading novels, he would surely revoke the commission and not pay the last forty pounds!

I really have nothing to do but wait for Miss Justice's information... Klein stood at the end of the street and looked at the haze in the sky, while helplessly muttering to himself.

He had already decided last night where he would spend the day.

In the morning, I'll practice shooting at the Quelaag Club, read the newspapers, enjoy a free lunch, take a nap in the afternoon, exercise through playing sports like squash. Once the Bravehearts Bar opens, I'll take a carriage there and see if I can learn about more Beyonder gatherings from Kaspars.

Klein had no intention of looking for Maric. Although he was certain that he had more than one circle of Beyonders, he was afraid that Miss Bodyguard would also belong to those circles.

It wouldn't be convenient for him to sell potion formulas, as it would arouse a high degree of suspicion.

Since the True Creator has given you the ability to divine and a strong body, would he still grant you potion formulas that you do not need? It's impossible just thinking about it! Klein filled in the details with his imagination as he boarded the public carriage that headed for Hillston Borough.

Half an hour later, he entered the Quelaag Club and saw an acquaintance.

It was Talim Dumont, the equestrian teacher who had recommended him to the club. He was Mary Gale's friend.

Dressed in a black tweed overcoat, the brown-haired Talim walked over. He sized up Klein and said with an odd smile, "Good morning. Mary and Doragu are getting a divorce."

Are you suspecting the reason why I joined the club? Relying on the Clown's ability, Klein easily made a surprised expression.

"Really? That is really surprising!"

Talim gave him a deeply suspicious look and suddenly laughed.

"I have a friend who's been troubled about something recently. I want to know how good your marksmanship and fighting skills are."

A commission? He only asked about my marksmanship and fighting skills, not reasoning. This is a request involving violence... Klein smiled and said, "I was planning on heading to the shooting range. You can take a look, but fighting requires an opponent to be able to see my standard."

"I've learned how to fight before," Talim eagerly replied.

Chapter 270: Reporter

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Holding onto a revolver that he rented from the Quelaag Club with one hand, Klein pulled the trigger repeatedly, hitting the bullseye accurately, with the worst shot hitting the 8 ring.

By feeding his practice with live bullets, along with the superhuman control that he had after becoming a Clown, his marksmanship was considered rather excellent.

If I continue practicing for a few months, I could even be considered a sharpshooter... Klein unloaded the revolver in satisfaction and cleared the empty shells. They fell to the ground noisily as he looked at Talim Dumont with a smile.

"Are you satisfied?"

"Very good." The equestrian teacher, Talim, had already taken off his black tweed overcoat and light gray sweater and adopted a boxing stance. "Come on, let me see the standard of your fighting skills. I can tell you frankly that I've received training as a trainee knight since I was young, and I've never let it go to waste."

As a Beyonder, if I can't even beat an ordinary man who has only received training, then I might as well die! Klein cursed silently. Without taking off his double-breasted coat, he set down his revolver. Klein took two side steps and gestured to Talim that he could begin.

He originally wanted to wriggle his finger to add to the atmosphere, but when he thought of the other party's strength, he couldn't be bothered to waste his time.

Talim appeared to be a little excited as he began bounce-stepping a little. He suddenly pressed forward and threw out a punch to the right.

Klein blocked and grabbed with his left hand, bent low and twisted his waist before reaching out his right palm, and did a smooth backflip.

Thud. Talim flew out, landing on his back. Klein didn't exert any strength towards the end, only throwing him off his feet through the use of inertia.

“Impressive!” Talim quickly stood up and gave a thumbs up. “As expected of a famous detective. Your marksmanship and fighting skills are excellent.”

I only beat a weak chicken like you, so how can you tell that my fighting skills are very high? Klein secretly lampooned and asked with a smile, “Now that you have a better picture, can you tell me what kind of request your friend has?”

“Heh heh, he will come to the club later. You can talk amongst yourselves.” Talim massaged his back as he said, “As for what the request exactly entails, I’m not sure either. Oh right, he’s a reporter at the Daily Observer, Mike Joseph. He’s probably hoping for some short-term protection.”

“Alright.” Klein didn’t ask any more questions. He continued practicing his shooting, but he didn’t limit himself to a revolver. He also practiced with a hunting rifle, a single-shot rifle, and a repeating rifle. He hoped that if he encountered any problems in the future, he would be able to use any of the firearms around him.

Shortly before twelve, noon, he returned to the first floor, went into the buffet cafeteria, and got a serving of roast chicken and a piece of pan-fried steak, as well as the club’s limited supply of cream cheese lobster

After placing his meal down, Klein got some Feynapotter seafood rice, fruit salad, oyster broth, and marquis black tea.

Facing this sumptuous lunch, he couldn’t help but swallow a mouthful of saliva as he praised the Goddess in his heart.

If this was eaten outside, it would probably cost 3 soli... Klein switched between using silver knives, forks, and spoons as he ate in contentment.

When he was almost done with the food on the table, Talim Dumont led a man, in a heavy overcoat and a half top hat, over.

“Detective Moriarty, this is the friend I was talking about, Mike Joseph. Mike, this is the famous detective, Mr. Sherlock Moriarty,” Talim smiled and introduced them.

“Nice to meet you.” Mike took off his hat and bowed.

He looked to be in his late twenties, with rather sparse eyebrows and rough skin. His pores were unusually prominent.

However, his facial features weren't bad. His blue eyes were especially charming. The two thin lines from the meager mustache gave him a somewhat mature charm.

Klein couldn't help but stroke the stubble that had become thicker around his lips. He got up and invited the other party to sit down, then he smiled and said, "Today's cream cheese lobster is pretty good. You can give it a try."

"Alright." Mike Joseph didn't refuse. He took a plate, made a circle, and picked up a lot of food.

"He came in a hurry, so he hasn't had lunch yet," Talim smiled as he explained for his friend and placed a stack of newspapers on the table.

"I can tell." Klein set down his knife and fork, wiped his mouth with a napkin, and sipped his black tea leisurely.

He was very satisfied with the meal.

At that moment, Mike Joseph came back with two plates of food. He took a few quick bites to fill his stomach before looking up at Klein.

"Detective Moriarty, have you heard about the recent serial murders?"

"The ones which had organs removed?" Klein's heart skipped a beat as he asked.

Talim nodded and said wistfully, "As expected, every detective is paying attention to this serial killer."

Mike pulled out one of the papers and pushed it to Klein. "This is the latest story."

Klein took it and discovered that it was the Daily Observer where Mike worked at. On the front page were the words:

"11! Another lady killed! Sivellaus Yard is helpless!"

The headquarters of the Backlund Police Department was located at Sivellaus Street at the edge of Empress Borough, so they were also known as Sivellaus Yard.

11? It's already the eleventh case? Klein resisted the urge to frown and continued reading. He found that it was indeed the same as the case he had previously encountered. The victim was a woman dressed in a gorgeous long skirt and had her intestines removed from her stomach.

This is clearly a case with signs of devil worship all over it. The Sivellaus Yard must've handed the case to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind squads. They have people capable of divination, mediumship, and all sorts of magical and effective Beyonder methods. How is it that the case hasn't been cracked. Why isn't the criminal arrested yet? Does the criminal have rich 'anti-investigation' powers and is able to destroy the souls of the deceased? Or could it be that the deceased soul, along with her innards, were extracted to fulfill the requirements of the devil-worship ritual? Yes, he's definitely capable of interfering with divination... Indeed, if the Devil pathway Beyonders lack such powers, how could they dare commit serial murders... Klein thought as he said to Mike Joseph, "You want to do a private investigation?

"I'm sorry, I can't take this case. Without the invitation of the police, I cannot take it. I have to maintain a good relationship with them."

The so-called good relationship is the kind where they invite me to the police station for coffee... Klein did some self-critical lampooning.

The real reason for his refusal was that it was easy to run into official Beyonders involved in the investigation of the serial killings, perhaps including the Backlund diocese's Nighthawks.

"No, not an investigation. No, the precise description is that it's not an investigation to seek the murderer. I just want to finish my report," Mike Joseph swallowed some shrimp and explained.

"Report?" Klein put down his white enamel cup, crossed his hands, and leisurely asked Mike Joseph.

Mike Joseph said, "If you buy the Daily Observer tomorrow or the day after, you'll see my in-depth coverage on the serial killings. The most important part is my reveal of what the victims have in common so as to alert people who fall into this group."

“Oh, what do they have in common?” Klein asked curiously.

Mike took a sip of his coffee and said, “Besides being a woman and wearing a colorful dress, there’s one other important thing they have in common. I did a thorough investigation of the victim’s career and found an interesting tidbit.

“Some of them are maids, others textile workers, tailors, and even teachers. On the surface, there doesn’t seem to be any overlap, but in reality, they’ve all been street girls.” “Street girl? A teacher?” Klein asked in surprise.

In the Loen Kingdom, teachers were part of the middle class and received at least two pounds a week. That was enough to make a woman lead quite a good life, so there was no need for her to be a street girl.

The corner of Mike’s mouth twitched as he sighed and said, “Yes, in the past. They may have had very difficult times before they found a job that could support them.

“I’ve done a survey before. In Backlund, one in six women [1] aged 15 to 55 is or has been a street girl. Heh, this is our country. Foreigners who come here are surprised that a very conservative country, a bustling metropolis, would actually be filled with street girls.”

Th-this number is a little exaggerated... If it were true, it could only be said that reality can be more exaggerated than fiction... This damned world... Klein was speechless. After some thought, he said deliberately, “One question, how does the murderer know that the victim had been a street girl? They don’t have labels on them, and even you needed a thorough investigation to discover this.”

“As expected of a great detective, this might be the clue,” Mike Joseph answered without feeling surprised.

No, if it was a Beyonder from the Devil path, then the standard he would choose from would be someone who appears to have sunken low but didn’t actually degenerate completely. Furthermore, they should have a keen intuition towards degeneration, and they might be able to see the corresponding “color” that runs deep. With the colorful dress

as a trigger, the target will basically be locked onto... Klein answered himself and asked, “So, what else do you wish to investigate?”

Mike nodded and said, “From these 11 cases, ten of the ladies were once street girls, except one. She’s still a prostitute at present. Yes, she’s the youngest, sixteen-year-old Siber. This makes it very, very odd. I wish to visit Golden Rose, which is her, uh—the place where she works for further investigation. I want to see if I can discover anything.

“I’m worried that my questions will anger the people there, so I plan to ask you to protect me temporarily. You don’t need to teach them a lesson, and you just need to protect me at the most critical juncture and allow my escape.

“If nothing happens, I’ll pay you a pound, and if there’s a fight, it’ll be raised to five pounds. What do you think?”

Klein laughed and replied, “Let me wash my hands before replying you.”

He bowed politely and sauntered over to the bathroom where he tossed a coin and obtained a positive answer.

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1. This is the late-Victoria era, a statistic in London.

19 Hope Street, Cherwood Borough.

This area was located close to the Tussock River which went through Backlund. Pedestrians could see the turbid but unusually wide water surface through the cracks and crevices in their houses.

The Daily Observer reporter, Mike Joseph, alighted the carriage and pointed at a three-story, grayish-blue building ahead of them. He said to Klein, who was standing next to him and wearing a black double-breasted frock coat and a half top hat and gold-rimmed glasses, "That's the Golden Rose, the best legal brothel in the area of the Backlund Bridge, as well as Cherwood Borough. It opens at three in the afternoon and stays open until two in the morning."

The best legal brothels in the Cherwood and Backlund Bridge regions? In other words, there are better ones in these two regions but they're illegal? Klein silently mused and shot a glance at the entrance which had an inlaid golden rose. It didn't hang any signboards.

"This doesn't count as a street girl, right?" he answered without thinking.

"Of course, it's of a higher grade." Mike personally led Klein to the front of the building and pushed the door open.

As soon as he entered, Klein caught a whiff of a mixed fragrance that was slightly pungent and heard a soothing yet suggestive melody.

Instinctively, he looked around and saw bouncers, in black coats and half top hats, standing on either side of the entrance and in every corner of the hall. As a legitimate business, they were obviously meant to deal with drunkards and boors.

The golden hall was surrounded by all sorts of sofas, chairs, and even a piano. In the center, there was a dancing area.

At that moment, there were many ladies sitting in different areas with their hair colored in gold, brown, pale yellow, or black. Some of them looked mature, some shy and young, some young and attractive, and others who were rather beautiful.

These ladies were either enjoying the melody, giggling whilst in conversations with each other, quietly reading newspapers and magazines, or dancing with the men.

It was only half past three in the afternoon, so there weren't many customers. At a glance, this place looked more like a proper ball than a brothel.

"If you come after eight in the evening, you'll see some interesting performances. Heh heh, if any of the ladies catch your eye, go over and invite them to dance and then ask them for their prices amidst the beautiful melody. If both sides can come to an agreement, you can head to the second or third floor and have a wonderful time in some room. Hehe, as long as you're willing to spend money, you can sleep here the entire night." Mike turned his head from left to right, suddenly losing his previous calm and gentlemanliness, appearing a little more frivolous.

He walked into the hall with a smile, and he approached a young girl who was at most fifteen or sixteen years old.

I-is he showing his true nature, or is this an conduct of a professional? Klein watched, a little flabbergasted as he subconsciously followed behind Mike Joseph.

"The victim, Siber, was only 16 years old. In theory, a girl of similar age is more likely to be a friend and would know more," At that moment, Mike lowered his voice and explained.

He then raised his thin eyebrows and asked in a normal voice, "Which lady caught your fancy?"

"I'm just your bodyguard," Klein responded with very normal logic.

Mike slightly nodded and suddenly laughed.

"I'm not used to being watched when I do that sort of thing."

"I'll be standing watch outside." Klein understood what Mike meant, and took a serious, professional stance.

Without another word, Mike walked up to the young girl, bent down, and extended his hand, inviting her to dance.

Being a prostitute at this age, Backlund sure is so bedazzling and dirty... Heh, to think that there would be a middle-aged gentleman of seemingly good bearing patronizing this place. Even the sides of his hair are white... Klein lowered his hands and stood very straight, watching Mike and the young girl engage in a slow dance.

After a few minutes, Mike walked back and said to Klein with slight annoyance, “It’s too expensive.”

As the two approached each other, he added in a low voice, “The girl knew Siber, but the owner, Ma’am. Lopez, forbids them from speaking with anyone else on this matter; otherwise, they would be severely punished. God, when the punishment was mentioned, the poor girl even shuddered instinctively. I can imagine how horrible it must be.”

Helpless, Klein sighed in sympathy, and asked in a suppressed voice, “So, what are you planning to do?”

“I don’t want to cause trouble for those girls again. I plan on going straight to Ma’am. Lopez.” Mike patted Klein on the shoulder and said, “Protect me!”

Klein turned his body to the side and warned in a serious tone, “If we encounter a dangerous situation, you must listen to me.

“Do you understand? Listen to me!”

“Okay, okay.” Mike raised his hands to his shoulders and nodded.

As he spoke, he walked towards a single sofa in the corner. There was a charming lady, with thick makeup, in a gorgeous dress seated there.

“If you don’t want to give up after a dance and embarrass yourself in front of those girls, I suggest you talk to Ma’am. Lopez first and find out the prices of the different girls,” Mike raised his voice.

The lady heard their conversation and looked over. She slowly got up and smiled.

“Good afternoon, gentlemen. I’m Lopez. Did any girl catch your fancy?”

“Yes.” Mike suddenly sized her up and said with a chuckle, “I really admire you.”

I admire you too... You're acting like this is your home... Klein's mouth twitched.

Lopez's expression froze for a second, then she gave a fake laugh and said, "Sorry, I'm not feeling well today. You should know that there are times every month where women feel quite under the weather."

Seeing that there was no way to get Lopez into a room for a conversation, Mike fell silent for a few seconds before suddenly turning serious.

"Ma'am. Lopez, I'm a reporter. I wish to understand more about Siber's matter. Here's my documentary proof."

Lopez's face darkened and she replied impatiently, "I've already told everything I know to the police. You should ask them!

"Siber was a vagrant orphan who was adopted by me. That night, she accepted an invitation from a guest to spend the night at his house, and she died on her way back in the morning.

"Alright, please leave! Or invite a lady to dance."

As she spoke, Lopez waved over two of her bouncers.

Klein stepped in to shield off Mike Joseph and escorted him back to the hall. Upon seeing this, the two bouncers didn't rashly chase him away.

After a few steps, Klein said in a low voice, "She's lying." "Oh?" Mike turned his head in surprise.

"When she spoke, her eyes darted around. She didn't dare to look at you directly, but she was also secretly sizing you up, which means she was lying and watching your reaction. In addition, her stance was highly defensive, and she appeared very agitated." Klein gave his analysis.

Mike opened his mouth and exclaimed after a few seconds, "You really are a great detective. Only with your keen observation and outstanding deduction skills were you able to discover such useful details."

That's only because I had my Spirit Vision on and could see that Lopez's emotional colors weren't right... I came up with the reasons after... Klein smiled and said, "Thank you, it's time for us to go."

Mike Joseph looked back at Lopez and saw that she was walking towards the side door of the hall, as though she was going to her own lounge, and that the side door was in a corner of the room. It was very quiet around there, and there were many areas in the hall that couldn't see what was going on inside. There were also two bouncers standing guard outside.

"Perhaps, we should follow Ma'am. Lopez and observe her reaction. Maybe the anxiety from just now will make her do something..." Mike suddenly turned his head to look at Klein. "Can you take care of those two bouncers quickly?"

"Sir, I'm only responsible for your protection, and that's against the law." Klein smiled in response.

"I'll pay you more! A total of five pounds based on the combat price from before! If there's another fight when we run, it would be 10 pounds!" Mike Joseph gritted his teeth.

"Deal!" Klein reached out and shook his hand.

Afterward, the two of them circled around to avoid the two bouncers from before and quietly approached the side door.

"Guests, please stop. Please leave this area." One of the bouncers stepped forward and stopped Klein and Mike Joseph.

"Sorry, we'll immediately..." Klein bowed politely and apologized.

At that moment, his right fist suddenly punched out, heavily striking at the bouncer's abdomen in front of him.

The bouncer instinctively clutched his stomach, his body bent over. As for Klein, who had now stood up, he raised his left hand and chopped the bouncer at the back of the head.

Pow!

The bouncer fell to the ground and fainted. His companion was clearly caught by surprise at this turn of events. He just stared blankly and failed to react in time.

Klein immediately slid over and covered the bouncer's mouth with his right hand and punched his abdomen with his left fist.

Bang!

The bouncer suddenly bent down and spat out his undigested food, and Klein promptly withdrew his right hand and chopped downward with his palm.

At the same time, his left hand supported his opponent, allowing the bouncer to slowly fall onto the ground without making a sound.

After exchanging looks. Klein turned the knob, pushed open the side door, and stepped inside. Mike Joseph lowered his body and quickly followed.

Why are you so skilled... You're just a reporter! Klein lampooned under his breath, walking briskly but at a rapid pace along the paved corridor.

Suddenly, they heard Lopez's voice.

"Tell Capim not to send anyone over in the next few days!

Capim? Send anyone? Klein looked at Mike and found him looking equally puzzled.

At that moment, they heard Lopez's footsteps that were headed towards the corridor.

"Let's go!" Klein tugged Mike and ran for the exit without turning back.

During this process, he closed the side door and broke the lock in passing. It could prevent the people inside from coming out for a while.

Then, as if nothing had happened, they hurriedly walked through the hall and approached the exit while hearing faint, angry voices.

After reaching the streets, Mike heaved a sigh of relief and said in amazement and sincerity, “I’ve experienced many similar scenarios, but not once was it as simple and relaxed as it was today.

“Thank you. I need to return to find out who Capim is.”

As he spoke, he took out his wallet, fished out a five-pound note, and muttered, “But frankly, your price is really expensive. It’s worth more than half a week’s salary.”

“But you can claim for reimbursement, right?” Klein answered with a grin. Following that, he asked in concern, “Aren’t you afraid that Lopez will find your newspaper firm and get the police to arrest you?”

“That’s a fake ID card.” Mike Joseph shrugged with a gesture of familiarity.

“...” Klein could only admire him.

After watching Mike board a carriage and leave, he walked diagonally across the street, waited for a public carriage and kept an eye out for anyone chasing after him.

At that moment, a rental carriage slowly approached and stopped in front of him.

A middle-aged man in a black coat stepped out the carriage and nodded at Klein.

He had blue eyes, a thin face, and gray temples. It was the same old gentleman that Klein had seen in the Golden Rose.

He’s not a customer of the Golden Rose... He’s just like us... Klein suddenly came to this realization.

“Hello, I’m Detective Isengard Stanton. I’m assisting the police in this case. Can we have a chat?” The middle-aged man pointed at the carriage tracks.

Detective? A colleague... However, the fact that he's able to assist the police in dealing with such a serious case shows that he truly is a well-known detective, at least within Sivellaus Yard... Eh, isn't the serial killer involved in devil worship supposed to be handed over to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind? All the police department needs to do is send a few assistants, so why would they need to seek the help of a private detective?

Yes, the eleven serial murders must've caused a sensation. Sivellaus Yard is under a lot of pressure, and they aren't willing to just wait in misery?

Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, but on the surface, he revealed a smile.

"Alright."

He boarded Isengard Stanton's rented carriage and saw a young man with brown hair inside.

"This is my assistant," Isengard, who had a thin and angular face, introduced. "Please, have a seat."

He didn't close the carriage's door, nor did he let the carriage driver drive the horse forward to show that he meant no harm.

Klein deliberately sat down uneasily and asked worriedly, "What would you like to talk about, Mr. Stanton?"

Isengard took out a dark pipe and said, "I want to know what you've learned from following Ma'am. Lopez. Did you hear or discover anything?"

"This... I'm also a detective, and you should know that we have confidentiality agreements in this business," Klein deliberately replied as though he was in a dilemma.

"I'm asking you on behalf of Sivellaus Yard. This has nothing to do with a confidentiality agreement." Isengard rubbed the pipe with his thumb. "A pound, um... How about two pounds?"

Having learned a lesson from the previous incident with Meursault, together with the fact that there was no need to keep it a secret, Klein replied without hesitation, “Sure.”

“Alright.” Isengard smiled and took out two one-pound notes from his pocket.

Klein acted as though he was recalling something before frankly saying, “We only heard one sentence. Ma’am. Lopez attempted to order her subordinates to tell Capim that he’s not to send anyone over in the next few days.”

“Capim?” Isengard nodded, seemingly enlightened. “Got it.” “You know Capim?” Klein didn’t hide his surprise.

Isengard handed the notes over and said with a faint smile, “He’s one of the most controversial magnates in Cherwood Borough.”

“In Backlund, innocent girls often go missing along deserted streets, and after a long time, they might be chanced upon in all sorts of legal or illegal brothels. A lot of rumors point to Capim as the criminal honcho filled with blood and filth on his hands, but due to a lack of evidence, he remains free to this date. Furthermore, he knows a lot of important people.”

If that’s true, then this fellow should die a thousand times over...

Klein nodded, sighed, and said, “This is Loen, this is Backlund, Mr. Stanton, I shall bid you farewell.”

“Thank you for your cooperation.” Isengard got up midway as a polite gesture to send him off. “By the way, your fighting skills are excellent. Maybe we’ll have a chance to work together in the future. How should I address you?”

“Sherlock Moriarty,” Klein answered briefly and got off the carriage.

Only when he boarded a newly arrived tracked carriage did Isengard Stanton instruct his assistant to close the door and order the carriage driver to head towards Hillston Borough.

Turning his head to the side, he looked out of the window. The gray-haired elderly gentleman had put away his dark pipe, pulled out a brass ornament from his pocket, slowly stroking it in his hand.

The brass ornament was a pocket-sized open book with a vertical eye in the center.

"The appearance and getup of Mr. Moriarty from just now were a bit out of place. He wore very cultured gold-rimmed glasses, but he had deliberately grown a beard around his mouth, making him look crude and barbaric. This is not quite in line with the norm. In this day and age, people who wear gold-rimmed glasses tend to care a lot about their image, the image of having knowledge and bearing. Maybe he's trying to hide something... Of course, it's also possible that he's a gentleman with an unusual aesthetic sense..." Isengard seemed to be talking to himself, but he also seemed to be teaching his assistant.

At that moment, Klein who was sitting on the carriage mumbled to himself silently as he leaned against the wall, *That Detective Isengard Stanton is problematic. Ever since I activated my Spirit Vision, he had a blue color of rational thought and indifference and maintained a purple color of spirituality dominance. There weren't many other colors of emotion appearing.*

For normal people, unless they're wholeheartedly focused on studying a difficult problem, it's very difficult to maintain similar states for extended periods of time. Other emotions will inevitably appear, the difference being the issue of how long they can remain in that state.

Yes... Either Detective Isengard Stanton is one such genius at observation and reasoning with extraordinary talent, or he's a Beyonder?

The tracked public carriage had two floors as it ferried more than forty passengers towards the Backlund Bridge area. Klein gradually reined in his thoughts and cast his gaze out the window and admired the two to three-story buildings on the other side of the road.

Occasionally he could see brown houses five or six stories high, a sign of Backlund's latest trend and of the kingdom's most advanced construction technology.

After a transfer, Klein arrived at Iron Gate Street and got off the carriage opposite the Bravehearts Bar.

As it wasn't the peak period at the bar yet, the moment he entered, he saw Kaspars drinking at the bar.

The old man with the brandy nose had requested for a glass of Langsky Proof, his eyes narrowed in satisfaction as he savored the fragrance of the malt and the burning sensation in his throat.

Klein moved closer, rapped the counter, and asked with a smile, "Is Maric here?"

At the same time, he had one hand in his pocket as he gripped Azik's copper whistle, using his spirituality to shield its negative effects.

Before he finished his sentence, he felt gazes sweep past him. It was evident that they were observing him.

By the time he finished asking his question, the gazes moved away from him and focused on Kaspars.

The old man with the huge scar on his face opened his eyes, and when he saw that it was Klein, he said in a bad mood, "He didn't come. He didn't come yesterday either."

He didn't come... Klein let out a breath of relief, no longer using his spirituality to wrap Azik's copper whistle.

When I mentioned Maric, someone looked at me... When they heard that I was asking him for his whereabouts, the gaze shifted again... Someone is also looking for Maric... Klein resisted the urge to turn around and observe as he analyzed the abnormality.

Combined with an original doubt of his, he felt that the question now had a general answer to it.

I was puzzled last week—why would a Sequence 5 Miss Bodyguard accept a three-day protection mission for 1000 pounds? This isn't to say that the price is too low, but rather that someone of that level already counts as a powerful person. In the Church of the Goddess, she's qualified to be a Nighthawk deacon or a diocese bishop. If she

can gain the favor of a Holy Artifact, she can even compete for the position of an archbishop or a high-ranking deacon...

Among the various secret organizations and intelligence agencies, Sequence 5 also implies that the person would be the person-incharge of a borough or at least the number two or three. Even if it were a Beyonder who isn't a part of any organization, a person with such strength would be able to establish a small organization of their own...

No matter which point of view it was from, Miss Bodyguard could enjoy tributes from her subordinates, so there was no need for her to personally "take the job"...

At the time, I thought that I had most likely hired a Sequence 6 "security guard" who would be able to last a little longer against the expert sent by Bakerland, creating a chance for me, but who knew that Miss Bodyguard would be so terrifyingly strong...

Judging from today's events, Miss Bodyguard and Maric are probably similar to me. Their identities are sensitive, and they have to hide away. Yes, their situation might be even worse, and they have to constantly worry about being hunted down... Tch, to be able to hunt Miss Bodyguard, even if that organization doesn't have any High-Sequence Beyonders, they must have some Holy Artifacts or multiple Sequence 5 members...

Of course, this is just my hunch. Perhaps it has to do with the exposure of Maric as a Beyonder and he's now targeted by the Machinery Hivemind squad...

After some thought, Klein said with regret, "Is that so. I was planning on playing cards with him."

Upon hearing something that didn't match Klein's usual manner of speech, Kaspars was alarmed. He didn't look around either, but chortled and said, "I'll be having a card game tonight. Texas, do you want to join in?"

"No, I just want to play till dinner. Sigh, I think I'll just head home." Klein sighed and left the Bravehearts Bar without even ordering anything to drink.

He had intended to ask Kaspars about other Beyonder gatherings, but in that situation, he carefully abandoned the idea.

In fact, he could've gone to a card room or some relatively sealed area to talk with Kaspars, but just to be safe, he decided to wait until next time.

Klein was in no hurry to return home. Instead, he went to the one-bedroom apartment he rented in East Borough and started divining above the gray fog to confirm that no one was following him.

After easing his mind, he reached Minsk Street before it was completely dark and found all sorts of subscribed newspapers crammed into his mailbox.

I was in a hurry to leave today, so I didn't even have time to read it. At the Quelaag Club, I had a good meal after shooting practice and took a nap, before being forced to play a few tennis matches with Talim. Heh, my skills aren't good enough, but my physical fitness can make up for that... He mumbled silently as he opened the door and went inside before twisting the gas lock.

He brought the newspapers into the living room and sat on the sofa. He lit the wall lamp and started reading.

Klein first read through the Backlund Morning Post and immediately flipped to the fifth page and saw an advertisement. It was an advertisement for the Ernst Firm's purchase of goods!

The prices were 7 pence per liter of flour, 1 soli of butter, 6 pence per pound of lard, 1 soli 3 pence per pound of cream, 8 soli per pound of marquis black tea...

In other words, there would be a Beyonder gathering in the same place at eight in the evening tomorrow. The code to the door is to knock seven times heavily, one time lightly, six long intervals, and one short interval in that order... The remaining 3 and 8 are meaningless... Klein interpreted the content, leaned back against the sofa, and began to look forward to the gathering tomorrow evening.

He wanted to sell some formulas to see if he could buy the corresponding ingredients or items!

Wednesday night, five minutes to eight. In an alley behind Bravehearts Bar.

Klein circled around for a while based on his memories before finally finding the house with the dark candlelights.

He was disguised today in a grayish-blue worker's uniform, cap, and a beard so that no one would connect him to the guy who had tried his luck by buying Black Snake's item.

It would be best if Eye of Wisdom and the Apothecary don't recognize me. Otherwise, a newbie who had relied on luck to become a Beyonder and was able to come up with several potions after a week would definitely be suspicious. Klein put his hands in his pockets and felt for Azik's copper whistle, the ordinary tarot cards, and the charms he had replenished.

His uniform was specially modified by a tailor. There were many small pockets with metal bottles filled with herbs powder and extract essence.

After taking a deep breath and slowly exhaling, Klein took out the metal mask that could only cover half his face and finished the first step to his disguise.

Following that, he used the Clown's ability to control his facial expression and his physical tics, as well as his gait while numbing his facial nerves. He wanted to be vastly different from his previous self.

However, I'm not sure what Eye of Wisdom relies on to recognize people. This is all I can do. Sigh, if only I was already a Faceless... But if that's the case, I wouldn't need to join such low-level Beyonder gatherings... Klein stood outside the door in silence for a few seconds. He then raised his right hand and knocked on the door, seven hard knocks and one light one, with six long pauses and one short pause in between.

Almost without waiting, the small wooden board on the door was silently pulled open, and an eye appeared behind it. It examined the visitor from head to toe.

Two or three seconds later, the door creaked open and Eye of Wisdom's attendant handed a hooded black robe to Klein.

Klein maintained his emotionless state as he quickly put on the robe and pulled down his hood, letting the shadows cover his face.

On the way to the living room, he deliberately took steps he wasn't used to and tried his hardest to eliminate the awkwardness.

There was only one candle in the dark and silent room and quite a number of members at the gathering. Klein didn't choose a corner like the previous time. Instead, he sat on a high stool right in the center.

In short, he wanted everything about his external appearance and behavior to be completely different from the previous two times!

And it was precisely due to his identity as a Clown that gave him this domain of expertise, allowing him to reflect his own body into his mind and gain fundamental control over it.

The living room was so silent that it appeared frozen. Time passed by, and finally, Eye of Wisdom looked at the clock on the wall and said in his ancient voice, "It's time. Let's begin. We don't need to wait for our late friends."

Just as he finished his sentence, Klein immediately said with a hoarse voice, "I want to sell potion formulas.

"They are Sequence 9 Bard and Sequence 8 Light Suppliant from the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

"The former is 220 pounds and the latter is 450 pounds."

This was the most suitable plan that he could come up with after much consideration. The Spectator and the Telepathist potions were related to the Psychology Alchemists, a secret organization that was still active in Backlund in the Loen Kingdom. If he recklessly produced them, he might attract their attention. And the Church of Eternal Blazing Sun was blocked out by the Church of Storms, so the corresponding Beyonders rarely appeared in Backlund and could do very little. Therefore, it was an extremely safe choice.

The potion of the Seer pathway involved Klein himself, and he certainly didn't want to reveal his characteristics.

After having experienced so many battles and watched so many battles with Beyonders, he gradually came to understand something. It was that below the high Sequences, Beyonders of different pathways had their own characteristics which didn't overlap. That was to say, each of them had their own strengths and weaknesses, and their strengths and weaknesses were all very obvious. The strengths were indeed strong, and the weaknesses were indeed weak.

For example, the Spectator pathway lacked the ability to fight in actual combat, but if they were ignored and were unconsciously misled, then no matter how strong an opponent's combat skills were, it was possible for them to die without knowing why. A clear example would be Hurricane Vice Admiral Qilangos, who clearly possessed the mystical item "Creeping Hunger" and had an overall combat strength of a Sequence 5, but he still died in a rather inexplicable manner. Most of this was thanks to Azik, but one couldn't dismiss the role of the Spectator.

Due to the fact that the majority of the Beyonder jobs below the high Sequence had distinct characteristics and obvious weaknesses with weak bodies, if one could conceal one's strengths and understand the situation of their enemies beforehand, it wasn't impossible for them to defeat someone stronger. In extreme cases, there was still a very small chance of a Sequence 9 killing a Sequence 5.

Of course, this was a perfect hypothesis, but in reality, it was almost impossible. Sequence 5 was already considered strong, and the corresponding Beyonder powers could be considered miraculous. Strengths could effectively cover up weaknesses, but before reaching Sequence 6, it was very difficult to cause any effect on them.

On the other hand, many of the Beyonders below high Sequences were very afraid of being attacked by a group, even if their opponents were all below their own Sequence. This was because once one became flustered, their attempts to avoid a fault would lead to failure of another. Their weaknesses could lead to fatal outcomes.

These problems were why Shepherds were ranked first below high Sequences. They were so all-rounded that if they combined and matched their Beyonder powers well enough, they would almost have zero shortcomings.

After I advance to the Sequence 7, I'll have all sorts of magical Beyonder powers. Then, even if I encounter a Sequence 6, I'll be able to contend against them for a while, and I might even be able to win... If I encounter a Sequence 5, there might still be a chance of escaping... As his thoughts raced, Klein looked around, waiting for someone to speak.

If Bard and Light Suppliant can't be sold, then I can only go for second best and consider selling Spectator and Telepathist. In consideration of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation... The formula of my own pathway definitely shouldn't be sold. The Witch pathway wouldn't as well, for it would lead to many tragic cases. Whether it's Instigator or Witch, they're the type that necessitates committing evil deeds... Klein was a little nervous, but his face remained expressionless as he waited.

"Actually, I can consider buying it." At that moment, the chubby Apothecary laughed. "I can also accept another apprentice and give him these two formulas, making him specialize in praying for light to shine on my herbs. Perfect! How extravagant!"

His words broke the momentary silence in the room. A man in the corner, who had his hood pulled very low, spoke in a deliberately sharp voice, "Perhaps I can give it to my child. At least it's stronger than my Sequence."

"Sequence 9, 200 pounds, Sequence 8, 400 pounds; if you agree, we have a deal."

To be able to take out 600 pounds at one go means he's quite rich. That's enough to buy a house in Tingen City... Klein pretended to think, looked at the other members at the gathering, and observed their reactions.

Noticing that no one had the urge to raise the price, and that the other party's bid had reached his bottom line, Klein thought for a while and

said, “I’ll tag on an additional request: you cannot sell these two formulas in this gathering, but you are free to do as you wish elsewhere.”

The man said sharply, “Alright, Mr. Eye of Wisdom will bear witness.”

Klein didn’t know how to prove that the formula was real, but he didn’t want to ask as it would expose the fact that he hadn’t participated in many gatherings. Therefore, he silently pulled up his robe and took out the two potion formulas he had written long ago and handed it to an attendant beside him.

The attendant didn’t walk to the corner. Instead, he went to the single sofa in the center and handed the folded paper over to the Eye of Wisdom.

The old gentleman spread out the paper and, without taking an extra look at it, placed it on a small round table beside him.

Then, he took out a handkerchief and wiped his right palm. From his pocket, he took out a ring inlaid with many tiny diamonds.

This ring was complicated and exquisite in design. In the middle of the ring was a dark green gem that looked like an eye. Just by looking at it from a distance, Klein felt his head swell and his body turn uncomfortable; it was just like back when he was taking his math examination.

Eye of Wisdom solemnly wore the ring on his right middle finger and then closed his eyes, as if he was preparing something.

Suddenly, the emerald-green gem on the ring bloomed with a resplendent golden color which was as bright as the sun.

Eye of Wisdom quickly extended his right hand and let the gem touch the potion formula written by Klein.

The rays of golden light became purer until they eventually turned into a holographic projection.

“Authentic and effective!” Eye of Wisdom announced in a low voice. He immediately removed the ring from his finger, not daring to wear it for another second.

His tone sounds just like a notary... That ring is the most prized item in Mr. Eye of Wisdom's collection, Sealed Artifact 2-081? It emulates the powers of a Notary? Klein watched on thoughtfully, feeling a little covetous.

After the "notarization," the deal was quickly concluded, and Klein received a thick wad of cash, all in ten-pound notes.

After counting the bills three times, he didn't fold and put them in his pocket. Instead, he held them in the palm of his hand and waited for an opportunity to spend them.

He planned on observing for a moment to ensure that there was nothing he needed before speaking again to mention his desire to purchase things.

At that moment, the Apothecary looked around and said, "I brought a few bottles of sedatives."

He really brought it? I've already forgotten all about it... In order to be different from his past self, Klein could only pretend that he wasn't around.

After shouting a few times and seeing that there was no response, the Apothecary muttered, "That guy didn't come this time? Maybe he's dead somewhere."

Thank you for your 'blessings'... But it's delightful that you failed to recognize me... Klein heaved a sigh of relief

The Apothecary habitually asked for Spring of the Elves marrow crystals again, but it was in vain as usual.

Moments after he shut up, a woman whose face was completely shrouded by her hood said with two boxes at her feet, "I have two weapons with Beyonder effects."

This must be the lady who sold the inscribed steel sword the last time, right? My spirituality instincts as a Seer tells me that... she has another two similar weapons? Backing her is some Beyonder armament organization, right... Well, maybe she has an Artisan behind her, also known as Sequence 6 of the Machinery Specialist and Savant pathway... Klein looked over with anticipation.

He had agreed to give The Sun a Beyonder weapon worth 500 to 700 pounds, which could effectively his combat ability. He didn't promise the specific type and characteristics, so long as it was similar and could be used, he could buy it. In any case, the Sun wasn't picky about it.

The woman with the hooded face looked around her and said, “The two weapons this time are easy to carry around.

“One of them is the Whip of Slowness. It’s a replica of a particular mystical item. It can constantly create formless restraints, influencing your opponent bit by bit, slowing down his actions gradually. The longer you last in battle, the more effective it would be.

“It can still be used for two years. 450 pounds, or the potion formula for Barbarian.”

This whip sounds pretty good, and it feels like the spider silk ability of the Demoness of Pleasure... However, would it seem a little strange for Little Sun to use a whip? Klein asked in a hoarse voice, “Can this invisible binding effect affect spirit-type creatures? For example, wraiths?”

The lady shook her head slowly. “No.”

Without waiting for any further questions, she continued introducing, “The second weapon is called the Axe of Hurricane. It can raise the user’s agility and running speed. There’s also a 15% chance of inflicting a numbing effect to the enemy and a 5% chance of producing a bolt of lightning. If used in a thunderstorm, the chance of the lightning bolt will be raised to 50%.

“This has all been verified through experimentation and concluded through copious amounts of data.

“This weapon’s effects can last for no more than a year. 520 pounds or the potion formula to Barbarian.”

This is much stronger than the Whip of Slowness. If it wasn’t for the fact that it only has the Beyonder effects for a year, it probably wouldn’t be this price... Right, according to the description of Little Sun and the scene I vaguely saw, in the air above the City of Silver and the surrounding area, there are always flashes of lightning. The highest frequency is during daytime and the lowest frequency is during nighttime. This is very similar to a so-called thunderstorm environment...

If it's really effective, then this Axe of Hurricane would be a truly mystical item in the hands of Little Sun. Each strike has a 50% chance of blasting out lightning. It would be absolutely formidable!

Even if that doesn't work, looking at the most basic Beyonder effects of the Axe of Hurricane, it's still quite a good weapon, and it meets the needs of Little Sun... As for the problem that it can only be used for a year, it's not a big problem to solve. In one year, with Little Sun's digestion rate and City of Silver's Beyonder resources, as long as he has the potion formulas, he would at least be Sequence 6 by then. At that point in time, he'll definitely need to replace his weapon!

As his mind whirled, Klein basically determined that he was buying the Axe of Hurricane.

At that moment, the Apothecary muttered, "Is an axe easy to carry around? I feel like I've heard a joke, and I think it might be more appropriate to make a wrench. Say, can't you sell stuff like revolvers with Beyonder effects?"

"I will try my best to collect similar items." The woman emphasized the word "collect." "Alright, friends who are willing to buy one of these weapons, please make a bid."

Before Klein could even speak, he heard a male voice from the long sofa.

"Axe of Hurricane, 520 pounds."

The woman waited a few seconds before asking again, "Is there anyone else who wants to bid?"

"530 pounds." Klein added ten pounds.

The man immediately replied, "550 pounds."

...This... Little Sun, if he raises it to more than 600 pounds, I won't be buying it. I'll get you a new whip! With a definite strategy in mind, Klein called out very calmly, "560 pounds."

He tried to make it appear that no matter what offer was made, he could add on an additional ten pounds.

And the 600 pounds he had just earned was just enough to put invisible pressure on the other party.

Upon hearing the latest price, the man fell silent and shrugged.

“Alright then, it’s yours.”

Phew... Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

“Is there anyone else who wants to bid for the Axe of Hurricane?” the woman asked again, but the room was silent.

“Sold!” The lady didn’t hesitate any longer and handed the box next to her right foot to the attendant.

The attendant had the Eye of Wisdom appraise it before bringing it to Klein, Money was handed over in exchange for the item.

Putting away the remaining four ten-pound notes, Klein opened the box and saw an axe that could be attached to one’s back or tucked in one’s belt.

Its entire body was iron black in color, thick, and sturdy, with a sharp edge. In his Spirit Vision, it was clear that the creator had used a large number of spiritual materials.

There were also many symbols and magic runes on the surface of the axe. They were embedded inside, turning into lightning and hurricane patterns. When Klein reached out to touch it, he felt a faint pricking pain.

He nodded and placed the box on his lap.

It can be exchanged for the true root and juice of a Mist Treant. My Magician potion is only missing the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther... I’ve made a good deal of money in my past few commissions, and together with my original savings and what I just have left, I have 209 pounds 5 solis and 5 pennies on me... The Beyonder ingredients corresponding to Sequence 7 are valued at 500 to 700 pounds... Heh, I still had to sell formulas or knowledge... Yes, I’ll take the time to check on Leppard this week and confirm the progress of his bicycle... Klein stopped bidding and quietly watched from the sidelines.

Later on, someone bought the Whip of Slowness for 480 pounds, and a Beyonder ingredient called Heart of Featherman wasn't sold because its price reached 1,600 pounds and nobody wanted it.

According to his knowledge of mysticism, Klein knew that this Beyonder ingredient would be classified in the category of Sequence 6.

In the following transactions, more failed than succeeded. After all, most of the Beyonders who came to the gathering had a specific purpose, and they wouldn't casually waste money and resources. They weren't like Klein, who bought any weapon as long as the Beyonder effects were good enough.

"I want to sell a formula potion. Sequence 9, Corpse Collector. 230 pounds." Towards the end, a man sitting quietly in a corner said with a deep voice.

Corpse Collector? I remember that this potion formula can only be found in the Church of Evernight, Church of the God of Combat, and the Numinous Episcopate... Has an undercover Nighthawk sneaked in, or is he a member of the Numinous Episcopate who's trying to revive Death? Of course, it isn't that strange for low Sequence formulas to be found in the wild. This isn't a huge secret... I remember Old Neil mentioning that the formula for Corpse Collector involved a desiccated black-spotted frog... Klein controlled himself and didn't smile. He thoughtfully looked ahead and discovered that the potion formula of Corpse Collector was quickly sold.

The potion formula for Sequence 9 is very easy to sell... Before, there was just a single Sequence 8 Folk of Rage formula that failed to close several times, while my Light Suppliant formula matched with Sequence 9 Bard was sold relatively easily.

Yes, most Beyonders would collect Sequence 9 formulas if they have the money to spare. They can give their own children and students more opportunities to choose from, allowing them to walk a path that they preferred. Under this premise, if a Sequence 8 formula doesn't have the foundation Sequence 9, they would have to wait for Beyonders who are attempting to advance, and there might not even be one in one to two

years. After all, the circle of Beyonders is very scattered, and most people don't know about the acting method...

Yes, they also don't know the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility...

Klein silently thought and didn't speak.

After another fifteen minutes, seeing that the gathering was about to end, he asked probingly, "Who has the complete spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther?" Silence. No one spoke in the living room.

Klein thought for a moment, then added, "I will provide payment that no Beyonder would refuse."

For example, the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility. Unfortunately, I've already sworn to the Goddess that I wouldn't impart the acting method to anyone else... Uh, I've already died once. I wonder if that oath is invalid... Klein forcefully retracted his scattered thoughts, but he still didn't hear anyone speak.

"Okay, next." He deliberately made a shrug that he wouldn't normally do.

The Apothecary cleared his throat and said, "I've brought quite a few of my own medicine. Take a look at what you want. It's not expensive at all. It's just a few pounds or even a few soli."

When the lady selling Beyonder weapons heard this, she asked curiously, "I want to know if the dangerous beast in the sewers has been eliminated?"

The Apothecary snorted immediately.

"You asked the right person!"

After saying that, he spread out his hands.

"I don't know either.

"After I got someone to make a police report, I haven't been to the sewers ever since."

Bro, you're asking for a beating... It must've been hard for you to grow up so healthily... From the looks of it, it was very wise of you to choose the Apothecary job! Klein couldn't help but lampoon in Chinese.

The woman took a deep breath and slowly exhaled without saying a word.

When all the strange medicine the Apothecary had brought were sold, Eye of Wisdom announced that the gathering was over.

He delegated Klein to be fifth to leave, through a secret passage in the basement.

From the looks of it, Eye of Wisdom didn't recognize me either... With some relief, Klein took off his hooded robe and tossed it to the attendant. Then, he walked out of the passage and skilfully circled around it.

After confirming that no one was following him, he took off his iron mask, left the secluded street, took the box containing the Axe of Hurricane, and headed straight to East Borough.

...

There were no gas lamps on Black Palm Street in East Borough, and after dark, it was like an abyss.

In a particular apartment here, Klein sealed the room with a wall of spirituality, then he summoned himself and carried the Axe of Hurricane above the gray fog.

If it had been a little heavier, I wouldn't have been able to carry it with me even if I had Mr. Azik's copper whistle to reinforce my spirit. Then, I would have to switch to a sacrificial ritual... Klein mumbled, sending his thoughts to the illusory star corresponding to The Sun.

"The World has sacrificed the weapon to me. You can prepare the bestowment ritual."

...

City of Silver.

Upon seeing the gray fog and hearing Mr. Fool's instructions, Derrick Berg immediately sat up and rushed to prepare.

Before holding the bestowment ceremony, he silently took out his knight's sword and made a few vertical slashes to ease his anticipation.

Would it be a straight sword, a broadsword, or a great sword? Derrick stopped without realizing, unable to stop himself from thinking, and subconsciously pictured himself using that powerful weapon.

After a while, during the ritual, he saw the Beyonder weapon that belonged to him.

It was an axe.

"Dear Mr. Fool, please tell Mr. World that I'll try to gather the Mist Treant's true root and juice as soon as possible."

After receiving The Sun's reply, Klein nodded indiscernibly and muttered to himself, "From the looks of it, he's rather satisfied with the weapon.

"Even without the additional effects from the environment, the Axe of Hurricane is still quite a formidable weapon."

He had passed the information regarding the Beyonder weapon's characteristics and limitations to The Sun. He didn't describe it directly in order to avoid sounding naggy. He needed to maintain his image.

After doing all of this, Klein didn't stay any longer and immediately returned to the real world, changed his clothes, and left Black Palm Street.

...

East Borough, Dharavi Street, in a cramped but lively pub.

Xio Derecha covered her nose and mouth as she squeezed in. To her, what was bad about this place wasn't just because it smelled of alcohol and sweat, but that she would easily encounter people much taller than she was. She had to face their armpits and the strong odor was nauseating.

Using a great deal of effort and even using the powers of an Arbiter, Xio finally squeezed her way to the bar counter and saw the man she was looking for.

It was a young man in his twenties. He had a face as long and thin as a horse. His eyebrows were messy and ferocious, but his facial features were relatively soft.

He was gulping down alcohol and laughing loudly with the patrons around him.

"Williams, I have something to talk to you about." Xio banged on the wooden counter.

This boorish action immediately attracted many angry gazes. However, they quickly retreated under the stern gaze of an Arbiter.

“Oh, Xio, I haven’t seen you in days. Let me see, it’s been a week, no—at least three weeks. Care for a drink? Half and Half?” Williams said, half drunk and half surprised.

Half and Half was one of the most popular alcoholic beverages in East Borough, made from malt beer and fortified grape wine, and because it has precisely made up of two constituents of equal proportion, it was known as Half and Half.

“Are you really going to let me drink?” Xio pricked up her brows.

“No, he doesn’t!” the boss, who was wiping the glasses, hurriedly answered on Williams’s behalf.

He clearly remembered how deadly the girl would become when she got drunk. She would use her fists to persuade the guests to quit drinking and throw them out one by one.

The corner of Williams’s mouth twitched as he spread out his hands and said, “Go on, why are you looking for me?”

He was one of East Borough’s informants and was connected to several gangs.

Xio frowned and said, “Williams, can’t you quit drinking? Save your money, marry a nice girl, and come home every day to hot water, food, and warm greetings. You can share all the things you’ve seen in the day with her, and she can tell you about the trivial things that happened in your house, and there will be cute kids who will kiss you on the cheek and play around you. Isn’t such warmth nice?”

She was able to gain a quick foothold in Backlund’s East Borough, all thanks to Williams’s help, so she had always wanted him to be better off.

“Warmth?” Williams scoffed. “It’s built on the money I bring back, and I’ve seen through the farce. If I could bring home twenty soli a week, I’m sure my family would be warm and just as you described it to be, but if not, Lord, the screams and insults from the woman, the cries and shrieks of children, would drive me crazy!

“My mom is a good example. Every time my old man comes home, he’ll beat me up and make a ruckus, so if that’s the case, I might as well use the soli and the pence on me to trade for drinks. No one cares how much I earn here; everyone drinks and chats, and the mood is really good. If I want women, there are cute street girls outside. They wouldn’t quarrel with you.”

Xio smirked and said, “You really are an incorrigible believer of the Lord of Storms. One day, you’ll die from alcoholism or some strange disease.”

“At least I’ve enjoyed life,” Williams replied without minding what she said. “I haven’t worked in almost three days, so I’m not going to give you a discount.”

Xio stopped persuading him. She stroked her short, disheveled blond hair and handed him the portrait of Lanevus that Audrey had given her.

“Help me keep an eye out for this man. Find him as soon as possible.

“Here are different portraits of him.”

Williams spread out the piece of paper in his stupor and glanced at it before tsking. “He looks too ordinary, and there are so many people in East Borough. There are people who die at any moment. Some leave, some come, and others become vagrants.

It’ll be difficult to find him.”

“In short, help me keep an eye out. Notify me immediately if you find anyone who looks like him.” Xio took out a five-soli bill and handed it to him. “Here’s some beer money. If you can find the person in the portrait, I’ll... uh, give you another ten pounds.”

“Ten pounds?” Williams whistled. “Xio, when did you become so generous? Or is this person worth more?”

“That’s how much his reward is worth. Ten pounds for providing clues.” Xio pretended to look around the pub and answered, “Don’t forget about this matter, I’ll come back in a few days time.”

She had already run through nearly half of East Borough and issued the mission to the gang leaders and informants she knew, and she had paid several pounds in advance.

As long one of them succeeds, I'll earn it all back. All those profits! Xio silently cheered herself on and walked out of the pub with her nose and mouth covered.

At that moment, the scene gradually turned chaotic due to some conflict between a few drunkards.

Xio glanced over in exasperation, then raised her voice and shouted, "Stop!"

A sense of dominance reverberated within the pub, and it was as though the drunkards had met their nemesis as they hurriedly sat down. Some of them even hugged their heads and squatted on the ground.

Phew, I wonder when I'll advance to Sheriff... Xio sighed, feeling a mix of satisfaction and anticipation.

...

On Thursday morning, Klein took the long trip to St. George Borough which was like another city altogether to show some concern for his first investment.

With his last tip and the revelation from Roselle's manuscript, Leppard was progressing very quickly on the bicycle project and had already built a crude prototype.

This was very much in line with Klein's impression of bicycles.

After a trial ride, Klein offered a few suggestions for improvements, saying he would disburse the second investment payment next week, and expressed his hope of bringing in new investors as soon as possible, so that the project could enter an industrial phase.

The only problem was that Leppard believed that he was the inventor and had the right to name the product.

He wasn't satisfied with the term "bicycle" and intend to adopt the more popular term, "bike." Klein didn't care.

At noon, he returned to 15 Minsk Street, but before he could take off his hat, he heard a series of illusory pleas.

Miss Justice? She has collected the information on the abject nobles so quickly? Still in thought, Klein prepared to enter the living room and head to the second floor.

At that moment he heard the doorbell and when he opened the door, he saw Julianne, the maid from the Sammers next door.

"Mr. Moriarty, Mrs. Sammer would like to invite you to a Sunday luncheon. There will be a lot of neighbors attending," the maid said as if she was reciting something.

After his return last night, Klein had handed the portable camera to Mrs. Sammer and exchanged a few words with her, but he hadn't received any indication of a luncheon.

That's right, according to the magazines, the middle class wouldn't invite anyone to an event in person, but instead, they formally sent their servants or maids to send the invitation... This is in line with Mrs. Sammer's style... Klein was puzzled at first before he immediately came to a realization, so he promised to punctually attend on Sunday.

Who wouldn't want to have a free lunch? And Mr. and Mrs. Sammer aren't very difficult people to get along with, as long as you don't mind their showing off... Klein secretly added in his heart.

He watched as Julianne left. He closed the door behind him and walked toward the stairs, his eyes scanning the slightly messy living room, dining room, and kitchen.

It's been a few days since I've cleaned up... I'm a bachelor, so it's not bad that I'm able to maintain a level of tidiness such as this... I have too many secrets, and I might even suffer an attack. It's not too good to just hire an in-house maidservant for chores. Yes... I should discuss this with Mrs. Sammer on Sunday and ask her to send her maid to clean up twice a week, and I'll pay for it... Many tenants and landlords have had similar agreements... Klein calmly walked into the bedroom on the second floor and drew the curtains.

After entering the fog, he found that the prayer had indeed come from Miss Justice.

This girl of blue blood sat on a piano stool, her hands on the keys. She wasn't playing the piano; instead, she was whispering the honorific name of The Fool that doesn't belong to this era. "...I've gathered the information regarding the abject nobles. I'm requesting permission to hold a sacrificial ritual and seek your help in passing it to Mr. World."

That's quick... as expected of a "professional"... Klein immediately responded.

Audrey, who had just returned from the royal coat-of-arms office and experts in this field, completed the sacrificial ritual with a little unfamiliarity as she threw the thick manuscript into the illusory door.

"I'll pass it to The World." Klein's tone was indifferent as he cut off the connection.

This time, he was in no hurry to return to the real world. Instead, he flipped through the manuscript and found the part pertaining to the Pound family.

The Pound family had indeed obtained the title of viscount from the Battle of the Violated Oath. After that, they were loyal to the royal family, and they had quite a bit of power in the army and their own fiefdom.

However, thirty-two years ago, two of the family's heirs died from serious illnesses, one after another. At that time, the old viscount had no choice but to bring the child of a distant relative home.

Not long after, the old viscount passed away. As the child was still young, under the enticement and instigation of the servants, he changed the butler and turned foppish.

In just eight years he had lost most of his fortune and was reduced to a baron. Even the family's house in Backlund was sold.

In the years that followed, his title was reduced once again to that of a baronet.

Died of serious illnesses? Their corpses are probably nowhere to be found. They should all be in that innermost room in the underground structure, outside that bloody door... The old viscount must've deliberately concealed the matter, preventing the royal family, military or churches to investigate... From the looks of it, the Pound family must've discovered the underground structure from the Fourth Epoch about thirty years ago. Perhaps, the underground secret door was built by them... but there are more than two corpses in that room... There were others who had entered in ancient times to probe the area?

Well, I'll have to talk to Baronet Pound in a way that won't reveal my identity...

Klein stopped thinking and looked at the last paragraph. He saw what he wanted: "Baronet Pound, currently living at 29 Sivellaus Street, Empress Borough."

Chapter 276: Rafter Pound

Sivellaus Prefecture was located west of the Loen Kingdom, across the Hornacis mountain range from the Intis Republic. And in Backlund, there was a street named after it, on the edge of Empress Borough, where the headquarters of the capital's police department was located.

Many people chose to settle down here for the peace of mind, and Rafter Pound was one of them.

The baronet stood by the closed window in his warm activity room at Unit 29, in his cotton quilted pajamas, staring diagonally across the street at Sivellaus Yard.

He was in his early forties, but the sides of his hair had turned white. He had puffy eyes and clear wrinkles on his face. His body constantly emitted the smell of alcohol.

On the floor behind Rafter lay some torn lingerie, and opposite it was a burning fireplace.

The baronet raised his glass and gulped the rest of the liquid in it. Then, he walked slowly to the door and returned to his bedroom to get some sleep.

As there was no pipe to transfer the heat from the fireplace, he felt the bone-chilling chill of late autumn as soon as he left the activity room.

"Damn it!" Rafter Pound cursed under his breath as he staggered to the bedroom door and twisted the handle.

The bedroom was dark, with only a faint crimson glow shining in.

Rafter was about to close the door behind him and collapse into bed when his eyes suddenly froze.

A figure was sitting quietly on a chair beside the curtain!

The figure wore a pair of grayish-blue pants and a cap. The entire person was completely hidden in the shadows.

Sensing Baronet Pound's gaze, the man slowly raised his head and looked over.

His face was painted red, yellow, and white, looking like the funniest clown!

Rafter was about to shout and run when he saw a revolver aimed at him and heard two deep and hoarse sentences.

“I advise you not to do anything unwise.

“If you cooperate, I won’t harm you, and I won’t take away your belongings—if you still have any left.”

Rafter Pound’s expression changed a few times, and he very obediently closed the bedroom door. Then, he half raised his hands and sat on the edge of the bed.

“You, what do you want from me?” He hiccuped in his drunken stupor, and his body trembled slightly as he reminded, “Sivellaus Yard is just across the street!”

“I know, but I think I’m closer to you than you are to Sivellaus Yard.” Disguised as a clown, Klein had changed his voice and tone as he warned, “And my purpose is just to ask you a few questions.”

Before he came to Sivellaus Street, he had divined if there would be any danger in making this trip in the mysterious space above the gray fog and had obtained an answer that it was very safe.

“Questions?” Rafter’s lips trembled as laughed bitterly, “Here we go again... Am I never going to escape this nightmare?”

“Have there been many people coming to you with questions?” Klein continued the topic.

“No, not only questions! After my uncle, the honorable old viscount, passed away, too many things have happened to me. The amiable old butler resigned for no reason and has vanished. Those servants and maids would change one after the other without warning, becoming unfamiliar and cold. They were looking for something, yes, they were looking for something, I wasn’t even ten back then. All I could do was watch, and I didn’t dare tell anyone. I was afraid that I would never wake up again!” Rafter replied as though he was on the brink of collapse.

Looking for something? Were they searching for the underground structure, or the treasures of the Pound family, such as the Beyonder characteristics and mystical items buried near the evil spirit? The royal family and the churches must've realized this as the higher-ups must know about the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility! Since the Pound family was in ruins, these things should've been taken back, right? Unless the old viscount paid a huge price and bought some other rare Beyonder characteristics and mystical items of the same Sequence to conceal the matter of the underground structure... After Klein finished listening quietly, he generated many guesses.

He seemed relaxed, but in reality, he could attack at any time.

"How long has this been going on for?"

"I don't know, I don't know. There are faces around me that I don't know. How can I be sure that the remaining people aren't also in cahoots? "Heh heh, I pretended not to notice anything. After trembling for a few years, I was enticed by them to do drinking, sex, gambling, smoking marijuana, and all sorts of things that make me look like a piece of trash!" Rafter Pound gave a somewhat crazy laugh. "They're finally relieved and are no longer watching me. When I sold that house, whoosh! All of them left, with no idea where they went. No, they must still be secretly monitoring me, preventing me from calling the police. Right, they aren't letting me call the police!"

This fellow has some mental illness... I have no idea if what he said is true or false. In his aura, the change in his mood colors adhere to logic, but what if he just feels that he had let down the old viscount and fantasized a whole sequence of events like this to find an excuse for his degeneration. Later, he would keep telling himself that until he's utterly convinced... As a qualified keyboard warrior, Klein, who knew a little of everything, had seen similar cases in his previous life.

After thinking for two seconds, he asked, "What did these people ask you?"

"They asked me how the two children of the old viscount died. They asked me what abnormal behavior the old viscount had over the years.

I wasn't even ten years old at the time, so I don't know anything!" Rafter waved his arms and growled under his breath.

"Calm down, please calm down." Klein lowered his left hand and attempted to confirm if Baronet Pound knew of the underground structure via multiple angles.

Time flew by as the question and answer session ensued. Klein said in a hoarse voice, "You really don't seem to know anything.

"I'm very sorry to bother you, but it's time for me to leave."

He stood up, bowed slightly, and appeared very well-mannered.

And almost at the same time, the excitement and appearance of having a breakdown on Rafter Pound's face vanished. His light blue eyes became abnormally deep, as though he was examining something.

When he saw the intruder about to stand up straight, he immediately reverted back to his previous performance—grief, anger, madness, bitterness, and neuroticism.

At that moment, a mysterious voice suddenly resounded in his ears.

"Crimson!"

Klein injected spirituality into a Slumber Charm and threw it at Rafter with his unarmed left hand.

Amidst crisp crackling sounds, a strong sense of serenity spread out, enveloping the baronet, causing him to shut his eyes involuntarily and fall weakly onto the bed.

"I'm sorry. The questions from before are for the comparison of what shall ensue. Next, it's the process of entering your dream and spirit channeling." Klein patted Rafter's pajamas, and with his hand on his chest, he made another bow.

Then, he used the Dream Charm and entered Rafter's dream like a Nightmare.

In the gray, fragmentary, constantly coruscating world, Klein soberly walked beside Rafter, watching him see the blank faces of the servants and maids who had no facial features as they gave off abnormal and

frightening vibes. He saw Rafter turning his head only to always to see an old face silently gazing at him, watching him curl up in the corner, shivering, and him being enveloped by a shadow, little by little.

This matches what he had described earlier... Klein tried to guide the dream to make sense of the situation, but it was as though Baronet Pound had a very serious psychological trauma over these matters. Any tiny bit of stimulation would cause him to scream and run like a madman in his dreams.

This made it impossible for Klein to get any more information.

Thus, he withdrew from the dream and cast another Slumber Charm on Rafter Pound before taking out Amantha extract and other materials, in preparation to channel his spirit in a mediumship ritual.

After responding to himself, Klein's spirituality passed through the storm of thoughts and saw the illusory image of Rafter, an illusory image based on the Body of Heart and Mind.

"What did the old viscount say to you before he died?" Klein hesitated for a moment before asking.

Rafter Pound muddle-headedly replied, "He wants me to maintain the family."

"What else?" Klein asked again in a tone of deliberate affirmation.

"He wanted me to remember the glory of the ancestors," Rafter answered blankly.

Klein nodded and asked, "What were those people looking for?" "I don't know." Rafter gave the same answer.

Klein continued asking and compared it with the answers Pound had said before, finally coming to the conclusion that Baronet Pound had not lied, and what he had just said was true.

At this point, he didn't stay any longer. He passed through the storm of thoughts and allowed his extended spirituality to return to his body.

Next, Klein methodically tidied up the scene and tossed Azik's copper whistle a few times, using its nature to interfere with any possible divination investigations.

“Thank you for your cooperation, Mr. Baronet.” After doing all of this, Klein bowed once again.

Then he turned, opened the window, jumped into the street, and disappeared into the night.

After a while, Rafter Pound suddenly opened his eyes.

Around those light blue eyes, there was a circle of ruptured capillaries!

He flipped himself up suddenly and stared at the open oriel window.

...

After making a long detour to East Borough, Klein washed his disguise and changed into normal clothes. As if nothing had happened, he returned to 15 Minsk Street in Cherwood Borough.

He didn’t rest, nor did he think about what he should do with the underground structure. Instead, he once again entered the fog.

At the very end of the ancient long table, Klein slowly opened his palm, revealing several strands of brown hair. They were Rafter Pound’s hair, hair he had gathered when Rafter was sleeping.

There’s still the final step—confirming with divination above the gray fog... Klein silently muttered to himself, then he conjured a pen and paper. He wrote down the content that he had already thought about beforehand: “Rafter Pound’s future.”

I want to see what will happen to you in the future so as to confirm the past! Klein leaned back in his chair and began to recite the divination statement.

As the ancient structure involved the six orthodox gods, he was afraid that there would be problems if he divined something directly, so he changed his way of thinking and helped Rafter Pound ask about the future!

"Rafter Pound's future."

Klein held onto the baronet's hair, closed his eyes, and entered a deep slumber with the help of Cogitation.

In the gray gloomy world, he saw a narrow, irregular cave. Rafter Pound, with his puffy eye bags and gray hair at his temples, was propping himself up on his elbows, crawling forward like a reptile to leave the hole.

Then, with a flash, he retrieved a black iron emblem of unknown origins and wore it on his chest.

The emblem had a scepter carved on it, as well as a hand that was holding onto the scepter tightly!

"Tudor!" Klein jerked out of the dream and sat up.

According to Miss Bodyguard's introduction, the black iron emblem was engraved with the imperial coat of arms of the Fourth Epoch's Tudor Empire royal household!

It was identical to the one he had seen in the ancient structure!

Rafter Pound is definitely not as simple as he seems to be... Klein rubbed his forehead and muttered to himself.

As a Seer, he had his own interpretation of the revelation he had received from the dream. On the one hand, he knew that it was something Rafter Pound would do in the future, and on the other hand, he believed that it meant that Rafter Pound had a deep connection with the Tudor family!

Through the three tests of direct questioning, dream probing, and spirit channeling, Rafter Pound didn't expose any problems, nor did he make me notice that anything was amiss. If I didn't have a fourth test, I probably would've been deceived by him. Yes... Maybe, maybe he really doesn't know anything at present and that it was a true act. In the future, he might even chance upon an opportunity to form a connection with the Tudor family...

But it's more likely that he has already learned a lot from the old viscount. Without confidence, he intentionally turned decadent and acted crazy and ignorant. For him to be able to hide from my dream and spirit channeling, it should be a result of some Beyonder powers. Hmm... He probably wasn't acting at that time and was really in a muddled state. Otherwise, he would've exposed himself in front of a person like me who is very experienced in such matters...

What Beyonder powers could it be?

What Sequence number is he?

Or is he the kind that is born with certain Beyonder powers?

Klein proceeded this line of thought and soon realized he had reached a dead end. He quickly pulled himself out of this dead end and changed his angle of thinking.

Rafter Pound has a deep connection with the Tudor family...

Can I make a bold hypothesis that he's actually a descendant of the Tudor family?

If the blood relationship between him and the old viscount is real, then things are going to be interesting.

The entire Pound family is a branch of the Tudor family that changed its surname to escape pursuit?

They contributed tremendously and were conferred aristocratic titles, and they returned to the center of power, one step at a time. Meanwhile, they were secretly searching for the secret remains left behind by the Tudor Empire in Backlund.

After an unknown period of time, they finally found something. Thus, they bought what currently belongs to Millet Carter's house and built an exaggerated basement, which was used to explore the surrounding area.

Thirty to forty years ago, they found the ruins and built a secret door to it.

But, during the exploration process, an accident occurred. That evil spirit didn't recognize any of the so-called Tudor descendants at all.

The two heirs of the old viscount died in that room, in the deepest corner, one after the other. Even their Beyonder characteristics and mystical items couldn't be retrieved.

Although the old viscount spent a great price to buy similar Beyonder characteristics, making it seem like the two heirs had died relatively normal deaths, the consecutive deaths made the royal household and the churches suspicious. Therefore, after the old viscount passed away, Rafter Pound deliberately exaggerated and distorted the secret investigations of the past, to frighten himself into having mental problems. He began to engage in debauchery so as to avoid the attention of others.

This can explain what previously puzzled me. How can a viscount family be placed under the control of some mysterious person without any action from the royal household and the churches? Even if controlling him was necessary, they would do it in a milder and undetectable manner. For example, using a Faceless of my Sequence 6 pathway.

A child can even sense something abnormal, much less the powerful Beyonders of the royal household and the three churches?

The reason why they were "unaware" can only be explained by the fact that they were the ones who had sent those people.

Yes... Back then, I surmised that the Tudor family and the Trunsoest family grasped the Black Emperor pathway, so due to the need to act, they would establish dynasties to maintain the style and uniqueness of the Solomon Empire. On this point, Miss Bodyguard has indirectly proven it.

The Black Emperor pathway's Sequence 9 is Lawyer, a Beyonder job that is extremely good at using order. Yes... Rafter Pound was able to deceive my dream and spirit channeling abilities because of this. Perhaps he's gone one step further? He cooperated with me sufficiently, so in his muddled state in the dream, he was still able to subconsciously use the loophole of order and affect the development in the direction he wishes to have.

Upon careful consideration, during the process of spirit channeling, Rafter Pound didn't seem to really lie. However, his truth was only a partial truth..."Maintain the family" and "remember the glory" can be referring to the Pound family and also the Tudor family...

Klein's train of thought became clearer bit by bit, and he had an overall assessment of the situation.

From Rafter Pound's current attitude, the evil spirit shouldn't be able to escape without any external help; otherwise, the baronet would've long thought of a way to save himself. It doesn't matter if the evil spirit would come looking for him; as long as it escapes the seal and creates a disaster, the secret of the underground ruins would be exposed to the royal household and the churches. When that happens, Rafter will definitely be implicated... The room opposite had collapsed, but it didn't affect the power that restricted the evil spirit. This means that as long as the innermost room isn't directly destroyed, the evil spirit wouldn't be able to escape...

Hmm... The plan is clear then. I would buy some explosives from Kaspars and collapse the entrance so that no one can get in, leaving the evil spirit buried underground forever. Heh, when I'm powerful enough, I can consider finishing it and help the citizens of Backlund get rid of this latent danger and harvest some valuable items in the process...

However, how should I collapse it safely? I don't know anything... Maybe Kaspars knows a demolition expert? After all, he is a blackmarket weapons merchant.

Klein quickly finalized the plan and decided on finding Kaspars tomorrow evening. He would try to settle the matter of the underground ruins within the week.

As for the true relationship between the Pound family and the Tudor family, and for Rafter's abnormality, he didn't want to probe too deeply into it.

"It's none of my business!" Klein grumbled and quickly plummeted down past the gray fog and returned to the real world.

...

On Friday morning, Klein went out early as usual and pretended to be very busy.

The truth was, he had once again gone to the Quelaag Club to practice his shooting and read the newspapers. He enjoyed himself quite a bit.

At tea time, he was about to leave after staying there the entire day, but he was surprised to see Mary Gale, his former employer, and Talim Dumont, the equestrian teacher, enter the club at the same time.

They were accompanied by a number of gentlemen in doublebreasted frock coats and beautiful ladies in fine makeup. Among them was the Daily Observer reporter, Mike Joseph.

“Oh, Detective Moriarty, what a coincidence.” Mike, with his charming eyes but rather rough skin, took the initiative to greet him.

Klein smiled and replied, “Mr. Reporter, are you done with your investigative news?”

“It’s done, thanks to your help! Let me do the introductions. This is the famous detective, Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, a good friend of Talim’s.” Mike waved his arm and said.

After both sides greeted each other, Mike continued, “I’ve roughly figured out who Capim is. I’ll tell you in detail when I have the time. In short, I have every reason to believe that Siber’s death was caused by a copycat killer and not by the serial killer. Haha, you will see the news of my investigations on the papers tomorrow.

“It’s just as I thought.” Klein smiled in response.

At that moment, Mike seemed to remember something and turned his head to Mary Gale and said, “I’ll make an appointment with you for an interview regarding the air pollution situation in Backlund and its solution. However, you have to communicate with my editor-in-chief in advance to finalize the page and time.” Mary’s eyes lit up.

“Alright.

“Thank you very much! Mike, why didn’t I think of such a good idea?”

This is for the promotion of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council? This reporter, Mike, has quite a lot of experience after all... Although the Daily Observer isn't one of the best newspapers, its circulation is considerable... Did Mary suddenly come here today because the other members of the House of Commons who are members of this club were coming? This type of private club is indeed suitable for politics and business... Klein seemed to gain an understanding and bade farewell ahead of time.

Before becoming a Faceless, he didn't want to get involved in high-level affairs such as this.

...

Evening, in an apartment in East Borough.

After a busy day, Williams entered the small room he rented, intending to change his coat, get some money, go to the pub for a drink, and settle his dinner there.

In the gloomy darkness, he suddenly stopped putting on his coat.

He saw a shadow standing by the window, its face completely obscured by the shadow of the hood.

"Who told you to look for Lanevus?" the dark figure asked in a low, slow voice.

Williams quickly put on his coat, gulped his saliva, and said, "I have a friend, a bounty hunter."

Bounty hunters referred to adventurers who used various bounty rewards as their main source of income. There were a lot of them in East Borough and in Backlund.

"Why did he suddenly start looking for Lanevus? This is a bounty that was offered a long time ago." The black figure was extremely tall. Step by step, he approached Williams.

"I don't know. Maybe she just wanted to attempt another bounty." Williams took a very tiny step back.

The dark figure pressed hoarsely, "Who is she?"

Williams immediately entered a dilemma, but after a few seconds, he replied with a trembling voice, “Xio, Xio Derecha. I don’t know where she lives.”

“Very good, very honest.” The black figure reached out and patted Williams’s body. Without further ado, he walked towards the door.

Williams secretly heaved a sigh of relief, believing that his rich experience in the underworld had helped him.

Don’t try to be brave when you shouldn’t!

At that moment, he saw the shadow snap his fingers.

Pa!

Williams’s thoughts froze, and his body suddenly split into pieces, scattering in all directions, splattering the ground and walls with flesh and blood.

Then, the shadow broke the gas pipe.

Amidst the sound of gas spewing out from the pipes, he picked up the candle from Williams’s desk and struck it against the wick.

The black shadow left immediately. A few minutes later, the candle suddenly lit up by itself!

Boom!

The explosion wiped out everything.

Chapter 278: Free?

After dinner, in the billiard room of the Bravehearts Bar.

Dressed in a simple black coat and a dark cap, Klein held a glass of Southvill beer, closed the door behind him, and walked over to Kaspars, who was bent over the table, trying to hit the ball.

Before he could muster a smile and say hello, Kaspars stopped what he was doing, straightened up, and glanced at him.

"Maric isn't here.

"There are no other gatherings you want.

"I have nothing but weapons."

...Very familiar with what I want... Fortunately, I have a different goal today... Klein curled the corner of his lips and said, "I'm here to buy weapons."

Maric isn't here... From the looks of it, they've been exposed and are targeted by their enemies. They've decided to switch locations... Then I won't be able to contact Miss Bodyguard... And I was planning on tricking Millet Carter with Maric's zombies as my helpers... They'll keep a secret, they're obedient, and they're unafraid of death. Well, the premise of their obedience is when the influence of Azik's copper whistle is shielded... As he spoke, a series of thoughts flashed through Klein's mind.

Kaspars was slightly surprised. With a look of suspicion, he leaned against his cue stick and rubbed his brandy nose and said, "What kind of weapon are you looking to buy? Have you finished the previous bullets? That's quite a lot of practice."

No, I practiced with bullets I bought at the Quelaag Club... Klein smiled.

"I want to buy explosives, the kind that is widely used in mines."

"What do you want to do?" Kaspars blurted out as his expression turned solemn and stern. "I'm warning you, don't try to do anything condemnable! I won't allow my customers to challenge Sivellaus Yard! Of course, you don't have to buy weapons from me."

To be able to become a black market weapon merchant and live to this day, from a certain point of view, he must abide strictly by the rules. At the very least, he wouldn't sell to those crazy fellows... Klein habitually gave his evaluation from a Nighthawk's point of view and smiled. "You seem to have misunderstood something, I'm not going to blast open the door of a bank vault or try to create any sensational news. I'm helping someone with the demolition of a building, making it easier for subsequent renovations."

"Then why didn't he find a proper construction company?" Kaspars didn't let down his guard.

"Haha, that's a secret chamber. He doesn't want others to know about it." Klein switched to asking, "Do you know any reliable explosives experts? I'm not very good at this sort of thing, and I'm afraid the whole house will collapse."

When Kaspars saw that Klein was making considerations to ensure that the house remained in good condition, the doubt in his mind was immediately dispelled quite significantly.

Just as he was deliberating for an answer, an illusory voice suddenly rang out in the room.

"There's no need."

A familiar feeling came over Klein. He quickly turned around and found Miss Bodyguard sitting on a chair in the corner without him realizing it.

She was still wearing her black Gothic regal dress and matching soft hat. Her face was as pale as ever, and her blonde hair and delicate features accentuated each other.

"Good evening, Madam." Klein slightly bent his back and bowed.

"Good evening, Ma'am. Sharron." Kaspars did the same.

So her name is Sharron... Klein thoughtfully waited for her to speak.

The lady named Sharron looked at Kaspars and said, "Maric won't be coming back here again.

"If you need him for anything, leave a message according to the third method."

"Yes, Ma'am. Sharron." Kaspars, who had clearly seen a lot of things in his life, seemed to have an instinctive fear of Miss Bodyguard.

Upon hearing this, Klein interrupted, "If, I mean if—I wanted to get Maric's help, how should I get in touch with him?" "Through Kaspars," Sharron answered simply.

"Alright." Klein spread out his hands and said, "Oh yeah, what did you mean when you said there's no need for a demolition expert?"

Sharron's blue eyes didn't waver in the slightest.

"I am one."

You are one? You're a demolition expert? Wait a minute, aren't you a Beyonder with special abilities, probably at Sequence 5? Why are you being a part-time demolition expert... Klein froze as he felt at a loss for words.

In the end, he chose to believe Miss Bodyguard as he said in deliberation, "I'm going to visit..."

Before he could finish, he looked at Kaspars. It was indicative that the ensuing topic wasn't suitable for this ordinary person.

Fundamentally, due to his body, a black market weapons dealer is indeed considered an ordinary person... Klein silently added.

Sharron looked at Kaspars and said, "Prepare the explosives. Two pounds. He'll pay."

"Yes, Ma'am. Sharron." Kaspars glanced at Klein and limped out of the billiard room, not forgetting to close the door behind him.

Seeing Miss Bodyguard looking at him silently, Klein felt like he was being watched by a ghost. He quickly organized his words and said, "I found Baronet Pound's address and visited him in the middle of the night..."

After recounting everything that Rafter Pound had told him, Klein began to deduce the process from the story.

“I think he lied in many areas, and it’s impossible for a viscount family to be so easily manipulated.

“If a child can notice something abnormal, how can the royal household and the churches not sense anything?

“After Rafter Pound degenerated, he had many chances to interact with outsiders and other aristocratic members. As long as he showed a little courage, he would be able to easily resolve the problem.

“Therefore, I think he must’ve been hiding something, something that has a high chance of being related to the underground structure.

“From the state of his mind, it seems that the evil spirit won’t be able to escape for a long period of time, so I plan to get some explosives and destroy the entrance to prevent others from getting in. Uh, I’m afraid that I might accidentally release the evil spirit.”

“Yes.” Miss Bodyguard Sharron didn’t confirm Klein’s guess, but she didn’t reject it either.

At that moment, Klein hesitated and asked, “I don’t know much about demolition, so I’m preparing to draw a layout and hire a demolition expert to give me the positions to lay the explosives and their corresponding weights. If-if I ask you for help again, how much would I have to pay?”

If it’s too expensive, it’d better for me to look for an ordinary demolition expert. After all, I’m getting only 50 pounds from this, while Miss Bodyguard charges 1,000 pounds for three days... Klein had already made plans.

“Free.” Sharron’s answer was still in her usual style of being terse.

Free? Klein was shocked.

From what he knew, free things cost the most!

Sharron sat quietly for a few seconds before giving a brief explanation.

“After collapsing the entrance, I’ll be the only one capable of entering and exiting.

“This was what I wished to do.”

In other words, after you're confident enough, you plan on getting rid of the evil spirit and harvest the items within? In fact, destroying the entrance is to help you eliminate any interferences or the greed of others. After all, other Beyonders of other Sequences are unable to pass through the boulders and dirt like a spirit... Yes, apart from the Apprentice pathway, but they don't know about that underground structure... Klein nodded in enlightenment.

"Deal!"

After saying that, he hurriedly added, "Hmm... Can you borrow a few more subordinates from Maric, subordinates with a tight lip? They'll be helpers to show to Millet Carter." "Alright." Sharron didn't refuse.

Klein deliberately didn't mention making any payment for that as he smiled.

"Then, let's schedule it for ten in the morning tomorrow.

"We have to explore the surrounding terrain in advance. We can't let the explosion cause any obvious damage."

Sharron nodded slightly as her figure faded away into nothingness.

...

Saturday morning, Xio Derecha once again rode in a public carriage to the East Borough to confirm any results that her commissions might have.

While waiting for the transfer, she suddenly had the urge to buy a newspaper to read.

She took out a penny and bought a copy of the Backlund Bulletin from a paperboy next to her. She quickly read through it.

Suddenly, her eyes froze because of the news article on the third page.

"At 7:10 last night, there was a serious explosion in the apartment building at 1 Dharavi Street in East Borough. It's suspected to be a result of a gas leak. The explosion happened at Unit #03-06. The tenant died on the spot, to the point of not leaving a complete corpse. At press time, this explosion resulted in three deaths and sixteen injured..."

1 Dharavi Street... Apartment #03-06... Isn't this... Isn't this the place Williams rents? He's dead? He died from a gas leak explosion? No, no! Absolutely impossible! He would never be so extravagant and use gas, even if there was an installation there! Did he end up like this because he had just accepted my commission? But Lanevus is a wanted criminal. If he discovers that someone was looking for him, all he should need to do is move. There's no need to kill people to keep it a secret. Doing so would instead expose problems...

The way this was done is too weird and radical, it's like it was done by a lunatic...

He's clearly just a swindler...

Poor Williams...

I-I will definitely avenge you!

I'll definitely find out the truth!

Xio looked sadly and gravely at the public carriage parked in front of her and didn't choose to board it.

She knew that it would be very dangerous to head to East Borough now.

She intended to go back at once and tell Fors to get her to move to a spare rental house. Then, she would head to East Borough in a disguise and ask someone familiar to gain a preliminary understanding of the reason and find traces of the killer's tracks.

Sigh, it's true that none of Miss Audrey's commissions are without danger... I thought that as long as I didn't stop someone who is already a wanted swindler and didn't stop him from escaping, he wouldn't retaliate in such a vicious manner... I was careless. I was the one who caused Williams's death... Well, that didn't exclude the possibility that he was also gathering information on other matters, thereby bringing about disaster... Xio closed her eyes and crossed the street to the waiting area on the other side.

...

At 10:14, after confirming the surface conditions of the Fourth Epoch structure, Klein and Miss Bodyguard, Sharron, arrived outside the building at 8 Williams Street.

Sharron had already vanished, and Millet Carter saw Detective Sherlock Moriarty in his grayish-blue worker's uniform and cap and his three taciturn assistants.

"It's convenient to explore like this," Klein explained.

Millet Carter's eyes swept across the three assistants who were obviously good at fighting and nodded in satisfaction.

"Your preparations were quicker than I expected. Is one of them a snake-repelling expert?"

"Yes, they're very good at repelling snakes." Klein didn't hesitate to give an affirmative answer.

How could a zombie be afraid of being bitten by snakes?

Chapter 279: Extreme Joy Begets Sorrow

In the dark underground structure, Klein walked around the hall with a raised lantern in his hand. He thoroughly checked to see if there were any other entrances. Of course, he didn't dare enter the tunnel that led to the innermost room, and the newly gathered snakes were, once again, blown away by a biting cold wind.

After receiving confirmation, he took the initiative to retreat to the side of the gate, where he watched, along with the three zombies, as Sharron placed explosives at different locations.

"She looks very professional." Klein sighed softly.

And without a doubt, the three zombies didn't respond to his musings.

However, there was a reason for this. He kept using his spirituality to wrap Azik's copper whistle so as to shield against its negative effects; otherwise, he would've encountered their abnormally passionate "response."

He had no intention of bringing this ancient and exquisite copper whistle with him originally, but considering that he had to guard against the evil spirit's manipulations, he could only sacrifice some of his spirituality.

Miss Bodyguard, no—Miss Sharron said that she's a demolition expert, and from the looks of it, she really isn't bragging...

Was she in this line of work in the past? Or does one of her Sequences in her Beyonder pathway make her skilled in this domain? According to the information I read back in the Nighthawks, a few candidates like Sequence 9 Criminal, Prisoner, Warrior, and Hunter, Sequence 8 Sheriff, and Sequence 7 Weapon Master and Knowledge Keeper. Heh, the latter has a nickname, Detective. It's part of the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom... As for the rest, I'm completely clueless.

I wonder which pathway Miss Sharron is. Nothing seems to match, and she even showed her ability to command the zombies...

While Klein's thoughts wandered and made all sorts of associations, Sharron finished setting up the explosives and, in passing, lit the fuse.

In passing? Lighting the fuse? Hey, hey, hey! Why didn't you give any warning? Only then did Klein jolt back to his senses and was startled. He quickly rushed out of the hall and entered the corridor outside.

As for the three zombies, they calmly followed behind him.

"It's very safe here." Sharron suddenly appeared and floated beside him.

Klein breathed a sigh of relief and asked, "Will dust fall from the tremors over here?"

"Yes," Sharron answered with a single word.

"That's good." As he spoke, Klein took another step back.

The hissing sound of the fuse burning reached his ears, making him feel slightly irritated.

It wasn't because he was afraid of the explosion that followed, but because he couldn't feel at ease.

"One," Sharron said suddenly.

"Huh?" Klein didn't understand what she meant.

Rumble!

The earth shook violently, and plumes of dust fell from above. Klein's ears buzzed, and for a moment he couldn't hear anything else.

If it wasn't for the fact that he was a Clown, he would've lost his balance and collapsed to the ground.

Cough! Cough! Cough! Having been distracted and caught unaware, he started to cough. He saw boulders and mud rapidly falling in front of him as they instantly blocked the entrance.

During the remaining tremors, Klein gripped the copper whistle given to him by Mr. Azik and observed its reaction.

Although he had divined beforehand that his expedition would be safe, he didn't dare to believe it completely, even if it was a revelation gained from above the gray fog since it involved the statues of the six

orthodox gods. Therefore, he cautiously judged whether or not the evil spirit was freed with the help of Azik's copper whistle.

The copper whistle's surface was cold but mild, and it had no abnormal changes. Completely relieved, Klein looked at the zombies beside him and confirmed one thing from their eyes: his face was very dirty right now.

That's good. It's in line with how I'm going to explain this to Old Mister Millet Carter... I didn't waste my effort in changing into a different set of clothes... He walked to the entrance and confirmed that it was completely blocked.

Without causing too much of a commotion, it's true that only those from the Apprentice path and Beyonders like Miss Sharron can enter in the future. By doing so, she has ruled out many potential competitors. No wonder it was free... Klein looked at the boulders and dirt before sighing.

Of course, I can too. I have a condition similar to a spirit body! He silently added this sentence inwardly with a smile, but his expression didn't change at all.

"Let's call it a day." With an exaggerated snap of his fingers, Klein led the three zombies back to the basement of the house. As for Sharron, she had already disappeared.

In the spacious basement, Millet Carter was nervously pacing back and forth, looking at the secret door from time to time.

As soon as he saw Detective Moriarty and his assistants exit, he let out a long breath and asked anxiously, "What happened inside?"

Klein deliberately panted and said, "That underground structure is too old, it hasn't been repaired in a long time. We were driving the snakes away, but with just a little bit of movement, it collapsed. The whole area has collapsed, but luckily we were close to the door and managed to escape in time."

"Holy Lord of Storms! That structure was that dangerous?" Millet Carter pounded his left breast.

“Yes, there are always only a few ancient buildings that can be preserved. The rest would’ve collapsed in the river of history,” Klein answered. “I’ll bring you in to confirm the situation.” “Will there be more collapses?” Millet asked cautiously.

“No, this area is quite sturdy.” Klein deliberately patted the dust off his body and coughed twice. He then led his employer in and stopped at the entrance that was completely blocked. The walls near the hall had also collapsed, leaving behind only stones and dirt.

“You can use this area.” He pointed to the corridor area.

Millet was silent for a few seconds before he sighed.

“Thank goodness I didn’t hastily send someone in to explore but instead went to look for you, a professional. Otherwise, I would’ve had to bear the burden of the loss of several lives.

“Alright, this commission ends here. I’ll pay you the rest of the reward.”

As he spoke, Millet Carter took out his wallet, did a count, and was somewhat embarrassed to find that there were only about thirty pounds in cash.

“Fortunately, I still have other forms of money; otherwise, I’d have to go to the bank,” Millet mumbled as he looked up at Klein. “Do you mind taking gold coins?”

“No, I don’t mind any form of money.” Klein smiled.

The gold pound of the Loen Kingdom could be in the form of gold coins unless they were of huge denominations. This was the guarantee of the denomination on paper money.

However, in the past hundred years after Emperor Roselle, the people of the Northern Continent had become more and more accustomed to paper money. There were even some Members of Parliament who wanted notes to replace copper pennies.

Gold, in the true sense of the word, already hardly ever circulated in the market. Only some of the old gentlemen would attach a fixed box

on the other end of their pocket watch chains which contained some gold in case of accidents.

It was to give them peace of mind and was also a habit.

Millet nodded, and following the gold chain on his clothes, he pulled out a box that flickered with golden light from a certain pocket.

He opened the box, took out five gold coins, and handed them together with the notes he had previously counted to the detective.

Klein didn't hide his actions as he counted the money and suddenly flicked a gold coin and caught it coolly.

"Thank you for your generosity." He glanced at the portrait that was facing up and smiled sincerely. Then he pressed his hand to his chest and bowed whilst facing Millet Carter.

Yes, if it were any other detective, even if they demolished the entrance and the passageway, they would definitely have nightmares upon returning. They would hear things at home, and their minds will turn weak. They would feel like they're being watched all the time and experience other problems. That's the corruption of the evil spirit's aura. It will take a very long time before the effects disappear, but we're different. Miss Sharron is like a ghost to begin with. As for me, I'll be completely fine once I go above the gray fog. As for the three zombies, they aren't even afraid of death, so what's there to be afraid of? Klein lampooned while in a good mood as he bade Millet Cullen farewell and left his house.

Arriving on the street, without even informing him, the three zombies walked in another direction.

Miss Sharron is gone... She really didn't collect any money for the zombies... Klein smiled as he raised his arm and waved at the departing backs of the three zombies.

Then, he went home and changed into his normal clothes and headed for the Quelaag Club to practice shooting.

After also settling his dinner there as a reward for the successful completion of his mission, Klein returned to Minsk Street in a public carriage.

The dark, gloomy environment was illuminated by gas lamps, and with his cane, he strolled leisurely along the street.

Suddenly, he had a premonition which wasn't too good or bad.

What's going on? When Klein looked up, he saw two police constables with a dog on a leash, apparently investigating the streets.

Investigation? An investigation with a police dog? Is this a result of the serial killings? The scene of the murder had the smell of cloves and gooseberries, so they included a police dog? Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

The history of dogs dated back as far as the Roselle period, but the numbers had always been small.

Considering that he had many things on him, and considering his earlier premonition, Klein decided to take a detour.

But at that moment, the two policemen saw him and signaled for him to stop.

The corner of Klein's mouth twitched as he waited in place with a smile on his face.

"Routine investigation." As they approached, one of the officers showed his identification documents.

"Alright..." Before Klein could finish his sentence, the police dog suddenly growled at him and barked endlessly.

Is it because of the smell of gunpowder on me? The smell of gunpowder from my afternoon practice? Klein instantly realized what was happening. He looked at the faces of the two officers who were now on alert. With a thought, he smiled and said, "It's this, I picked up a revolver along the way, along with an underarm holster and bullets. I was planning on handing them over to the police."

Slowly, he took out his revolver, raised his hands to his shoulders, and added with a serious smile, "Officers, I really am not bearing a gun illegally."

As one constable remained on high alert, the other constable received the revolver and said seriously, “You have to come back to the police station with us.”

“Alright,” Klein returned with a radiant smile. “But I have a request. Please inform my lawyer, Mr. Jurgen Cooper. I will only accept a body search with him around.”

Chapter 280: The First Step

In a corner of East Borough.

A drunken Zeon faced the wall, pulled off his pants, and began watering the moss in comfort.

When he was done, someone suddenly patted his shoulder.

Zeon couldn't help but shiver a few times. He picked up his pants and half turned to see a short boy in a canvas jacket and cap.

The "boy" raised his head, revealing a mild and delicate face despite looking dirty.

"Xio? Why are you dressed like that?" Zeon blurted out in surprise.

Xio put her index finger to her lips to indicate the need for silence.

Then, she suppressed her voice and said, "I'll ask and you answer. Keep your voice down."

Astonished by her awe-inspiring presence, Zeon could only nod.

"Which of the guys, that Williams knew, have died within the past two days?" Xio asked in a low voice.

Zeon used his alcohol-paralyzed brain to carefully think for a while and said, "Gavin! Gavin was found to have drowned in the Tussock River this morning!

"He probably fell into the river last night. The poor sod doesn't know how to swim and likes to enjoy the wind by the river when he's drunk."

Xio's gaze suddenly became sharp. Without any hesitation, she asked, "Did Gavin accept Williams's request to look for the wanted criminal, Lanevus?"

"Of course, we all got this commission from Williams. Anyway, it's not like it's a big deal. All we have to do is show the portrait to everyone we know and keep an eye out for someone who looks like him. Oh, Williams, he said that if there's a clue, he'll treat me to three days of booze and meat! The poor fellow actually died in a gas explosion. That's why I refuse to have my landlord install a gas pipe!

Uh... That was months ago. I can only afford a cheap motel now," Zeon droned on.

"What region is Gavin in charge of? Did he mention anything to you?" Xio looked sideways, pursed her lips, and stared straight at Zeon.

"H-he usually goes to the dock area near the East Balam Dock. He even met me yesterday evening and said that he went to the Workers Alliance Tavern there to spread the news of his search for Lanevus, and he also showed the portrait of Lanevus to everyone present." Zeon hiccuped.

There were many docks in Backlund, most of which were considered as the dock area and designated as "shipyards."

"And after that? Did Gavin say what he was going to do?" Xio asked again, frowning doubtfully.

"Of course, drinking! He planned to have a good drink and then find a place to sleep! Oh, the poor sod must've felt hot from drinking and wanted to take a bath in the river, but he forgot he couldn't swim, and it's almost winter!" Zeon sighed again.

This... Gavin didn't discover anything. He had gone to the Workers Alliance Tavern in East Balam Dock and distributed "leaflets" to search for Lanevus, but ended up meeting his demise. It even implicated Williams... The murderer's reaction can no longer be described as extreme anymore. He's simply a lunatic...

If I were Lanevus, the easiest option would be to immediately move somewhere else and avoid being found. Unless—unless he's embroiled in something and cannot leave anytime soon... But I wasn't the only one looking for him. There are also many bounty hunters. He may kill Williams, but can he kill that many people? If he had the ability, he would kill off everyone who spread wanted posters in Sivellaus Yard!

Xio was completely befuddled by the entire matter, just like how she found Williams's death was impossible.

In the end, she decided to report the problem to Miss Audrey first, and then head to the Workers Alliance Tavern in East Balam in disguise.

She wouldn't make any inquiries and only observe to see if there was anyone suspicious.

...

Cherwood Borough. Rice Police Station.

Once again, Klein found himself huddled on a backrest-equipped bench with thieves and drunkards.

How unlucky... To think that I would run into the police and fail to take a detour in time. It's all because of that damn serial killer! As Klein cursed that particular person, he thought about how to hide his charms and the herbal powder he couldn't explain away and dodge the body search that followed.

He had tried to put them in his black gloves, then find a chance to slip them into a hidden spot in the police station, only to retrieve them when he left.

Just then, his eyes lit up and he saw the young lawyer, Jurgen Cooper, with his hair neatly combed back. He was dressed like he was attending a banquet. Just as Cooper came over, he was accompanied by a police constable.

"You can leave after signing your name," Jurgen said with his usual serious expression.

"Is that all?" Klein asked in surprise.

Jurgen nodded slightly.

"Yes, they know you're a well-known detective."

What kind of reason is this? Klein didn't dare to ask further. He immediately got up and followed after Jurgen who was wearing a long black tweed coat. He signed his name at a leisurely pace before leaving.

The weather was different from the last time he was led out from the police station by Jurgen. There was no rain and only thick clouds obscuring the crimson moon and stars. The streets were illuminated by gas lamps that lined both sides of the streets.

“Thank you so much! I’ve troubled you once again!” Klein briskly walked forward and came to Jurgen’s side.

Jurgen turned his head to look at him and said to him without a smile, “There’s no need to thank me. This is my job.

“Two pounds.”

“...” Klein sized him up seriously and revealed a smile. “Okay.”

His wallet was bulging recently, and he produced two one-pound notes at once.

Without a trace of politeness, Jurgen received the payment and said, “If you’re willing to enter into a formal partnership, then every time you come to the police station, I’ll only charge you a pound. Of course, not for the cases that are serious. You have to understand that a large portion of the fees I charge will go to the office.”

It’s as if I would frequently be invited to the police station for some coffee in the future... Pui, they don’t even give coffee. There’s isn’t even a cup of water! Before Klein could answer, he heard Jurgen add.

“For a private detective, getting in and out of the police station is something that happens every once in a while. It’s an occupational hazard.

“Well, I know very well that every private detective has a problem with the illegal bearing of arms and the illegal trespassing in other people’s homes.”

“Your response this time was very good. The police couldn’t find enough evidence to prove that you were bearing a gun illegally, and the explanation for the gunpowder reaction on your body was quite sufficient. The name Quelaag Club was enough to convince them; otherwise, you most likely would’ve had to go to the magistrate’s court.

“So, you’re not a suspect, but a good citizen. A good citizen who picked up a gun and handed it in, so there was no need for a body search.”

Alright... But I lost a revolver and the corresponding bullets. That's several pounds, and there's also the lawyer's fee. Klein squeezed out a smile.

"I understand. Lawyer Jurgen, let's establish a formal partnership."

The corner of Jurgen's mouth twitched. With an extremely professional smile, he extended his hand and said, "I hope for a pleasant partnership.

"I sincerely hope that I don't have to see you too often at the police station."

That's not something that's up to me to decide... Klein gave a selfdeprecating laugh.

...

Back at 15 Minsk Street, Klein eased himself with a hot bath.

But at that moment, he once again heard illusory prayers coming from a woman.

Miss Justice? Is there a clue regarding Lanevus? Klein suddenly jumped out of the bathtub, quickly dried his body, put on his clothes, and went above the gray fog.

Staring at the constantly expanding and shrinking crimson star, he extended his spirituality and chose to listen.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era...

"Honorable Mr. Fool, there's been a problem with the

investigation of Lanevus..."

Justice, who was wearing a white gown for an unknown reason, recounted the explosion that happened on Dharavi Street in East Borough, as well as Gavin's drowning.

As a Telepathist, who had already gained some mastery, she didn't add her own guesses, lest it affect the judgment of Mr. Fool.

After listening carefully, Klein frowned, feeling that the killer's reaction was unimaginably extreme.

Unlike Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, Lanevus, as a swindler, would immediately move if he discovered anything was amiss. That should be his professional instinct. There's no reason to follow the clues in reverse and kill those who are seeking him.

According to this standard, 80% of East Borough's bounty hunters would die. This would cause a sensation and cause the case to be taken over by the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, or Machinery Hivemind!

Hmm... Has the benefits Lanevus gained, from the ritual of praying to the True Creator to send his son down, left him mad? This is very consistent with the style of the True Creator... However, the problem lies with the fact that it would be difficult for a lunatic to hide himself... Apart from the potential... Klein fell into deep thought and was in no hurry to respond to Miss

Justice.

He had read the newspapers and known about the explosion, so he used dream divination to recall the details.

Then he wrote a new divination statement:

"Clues to the explosion in Dharavi Street."

As he recited it silently, he leaned back in his chair and entered a dream. He saw a three-story, grayish-blue apartment.

On the third floor of the apartment, a room had lost its windows and half the wall had been destroyed. It was filled with signs of an explosion.

The scene quickly shattered. Klein woke up from his reverie as he tapped the edge of the table and thought to himself.

The clues are at the scene of the crime?

...This revelation can also mean that the murderer is still watching the crime scene and wants to finish off the person who comes to investigate the matter.

Yes... This will give him a chance to find the person who recently issued the bounty for Lanevus.

I'll visit the crime scene in disguise and see if I can find the killer. Even if he isn't Lanevus, he must surely be connected to Lanevus.

But he must've hidden himself very well. How can I find him without attracting his attention?

A thought flashed as Klein's eyes was cast onto the All-Black Eye on the long bronze table. This was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by the Marionettist Rosago.

In the real world, I can't use this item to manipulate those strange threads because of the residual mental corruption from the True Creator. There will be irreversible harm after interacting with it for a certain amount of time. However, if it was used temporarily, I can use the threads to find a hidden person. That's something acceptable. It's just like how I used it to determine if Miss Bodyguard had left previously... Klein narrowed his eyes, removed his spirit pendulum, and divined if his trip would be dangerous.

The answer was positive, but the amplitude and frequency of the spinning weren't excessive.

That's acceptable... Klein was silent for a few seconds before returning to the real world.

Then, by summoning himself, he placed the All-Black Eye into an iron cigar case and brought it back to his bedroom.

After changing his clothes, sticking his beard on, and getting ready, Klein came before the mirror and examined himself.

The faint scholarly vibe that he had was completely concealed by the beard on his face, and his brown eyes seemed to be like an ancient pool which hid and sealed something within.

Compared to when he was in Tingen City, Klein almost didn't recognize himself.

One by one, he stretched out his fingers and clenched them into a fist. Looking at the mirror, he said in a low and hoarse voice, “Captain, this is the first step to avenging both you and me.”

Before he finished his sentence, he saw himself grinning in the mirror, a brilliant smile on his face.

Chapter 281: Clue

In the suburbs west of North Borough, in a soon-to-beabandoned three-story house.

It originally belonged to the Backlund Medical School, but the latter's main campus had now moved to a better and more suitable location, leaving behind only a small number of teaching staff and students who were left "guarding" the area after failing to graduate.

Audrey was wearing a white gown and white mask. Her smooth blonde hair was also coiled up and stuffed under a cool-colored surgical cap.

She darted her eyes to the side and looked at Fors Wall who was dressed in the same way. She always felt that Fors had a special temperament that seemed to make her more suited to such attires than herself.

Eh... It's the kind of temperament that allows her to pick up a scalpel and cut open a patient's stomach at any moment... Audrey didn't say anything. She followed half a step behind Fors as they entered the classroom in front of them.

She was startled by the information she had received from Fors because Mr. Fool had said it was a simple task.

Considering that the simplicity of said task might be from Mr. Fool's point of view, Audrey took advantage of the moment when she was alone, changing into a disguise, to recite his honorific name and silently pray, so as to report everything that had exactly happened.

However, she had yet to receive a response.

After passing through the door and entering a room, Audrey instinctively looked around and found that this wasn't an ordinary classroom. There were actually four skeletal specimens and four coffins made of glass. The coffins were filled with pale naked corpses that were soaked in preserving agents.

At the very top of the classroom, there was a transparent glass pillar that was also filled with a liquid. Floating inside was a male corpse that wore a black scholarly robe.

The corpse's clothes stuck tightly to its body, giving off an extremely heavy feeling. He didn't relax and simply floated upright in the middle.

It's as if he had died by drowning instead of being placed in there after his death... Audrey made a preliminary judgment based on her attitude as a Spectator.

In addition, she saw a number of men in white coats, white masks, and surgical caps sitting around the long tables in the room. None of them said a word, just like the bodies and bones around them.

Looking out at the crimson moon which had finally peeked out of the gloomy darkness, Audrey turned her head back to look at the scene inside the classroom. For a moment, she couldn't help but shudder as this place instilled an instinctive fear.

But at the same time, she felt excited and agitated.

This is what the life of a Beyonder should be... Audrey silently muttered to herself as she followed Fors to a corner before sitting down.

After waiting for a while, the floating black-clothed male corpse inside the upright glass pillar at the front of the classroom suddenly opened his eyes. His voice transmitted through the layers of obstructions.

"Let's begin."

...

East Borough, Dharavi Street.

In his dusty grayish-blue worker uniform and cap, he walked along the dark streets that only had a few gas lamps that were still working.

There was candlelight shining down from the various apartments on both sides of the street. This was combined with the crimson moonlight that passed through the clouds with great difficulty, and they barely outlined the silhouettes of the pedestrians.

Klein encountered people with old, tattered clothes, their faces numb with despair. They were the homeless who had been chased away by the police.

They had no place to sleep, so they wandered aimlessly through the streets. Occasionally, they would find some inconspicuous corner or park bench to rest at for a while, but they were soon chased away again.

In the cold and dark night, Klein felt that they were more like zombies than the zombies he had seen, and the entire East Borough was more like an abyss than the legendary abyss.

He hurriedly took a quick breath which hurt his throat, causing him to cough involuntarily. He quickly gathered his thoughts and looked through the corner of his eyes at the apartment on the corner of the street. It had obviously suffered from an explosion and hadn't been repaired yet.

The best place to monitor the crime scene is the apartment across the street. The third and fourth story and the roof all meet these requirements... Klein analyzed the situation with the knowledge he had learned as a Nighthawk.

Throughout the whole process, he didn't slow down his pace to avoid arousing suspicion.

At the end of the street, Klein smoothly crossed the apartment building numbered 1 and entered the building across the street from the crime scene.

The one-bedroom apartment he had rented in East Borough was similar to this apartment, and he had also lived in an apartment of slightly higher class with his brother Benson and sister Melissa in Tingen City for quite a long time. It was Klein's personal experience, but it also came from the memory fragments of the original Klein.

As his thoughts raced, Klein lowered his cap, lowered his head, and without rushing, he walked up the creaking stairs to the third floor.

Due to his unlucky encounter in the evening, he no longer had a revolver, so all he could do was stick one hand into his pocket and hold a few tarot cards in between his fingers.

There was no light other than the faint moonlight in the corridor of the third floor. Klein was in no hurry to move forward, so he carefully observed the layout.

The spot directly across the crime scene is on the left. The one with the best view for surveillance should be the third room from here... Klein began to walk slowly and carefully.

After walking past two rooms, he also inserted his right hand into his pocket and gently opened the iron cigar case.

After a split-second, his fingers touched the All-Black Eye, and the murmurs resounded in his ears as they attempted to tear his mind apart.

At the same time, with the help of this corrupted item, Klein saw many strange black lines.

These thin lines floated in the air, and although they were intertwined and entangled a little, he could still distinguish who they belonged to if he traced them back to the source.

The corresponding figures were reflected in Klein's soon-to-becooked brain. There were men, women, and children sleeping in the bunk beds, and several tenants lying in bed on the floor.

Other than that, there were no other special spots, nor were there any hidden figures.

The illusion in front of him and the auditory hallucination in his ears slowly improved as Klein quickly retracted his hand from the All-Black Eye.

He endured the pain as he continued to move forward. Once he felt some relief, he would immediately observe the other room.

Unfortunately, his efforts of "searching" the entire apartment to see if there were any places that allowed the observation of the crime scene was in vain.

Phew. Phew... Klein cowered in a corner of a balcony, his hands were on his knees as he panted heavily.

Tears streamed from the corners of his eyes, and from time to time, his nose would run as if he had fallen sick.

This was the result of his repeated contact with the All-Black Eye within a short period of time. Even with Klein's resistance in this area, he wasn't completely immune to it.

The only thing that satisfied him was that it only agitated him and didn't corrupt him. Otherwise, he would've given up long ago and wouldn't have dared to try again. That would've led directly to devolving into madness.

After resting for a while, Klein finally calmed down and switched to a different apartment that didn't have the same view as this one, but it was still for naught.

Did I interpret it wrong? The clues are at the scene of the crime? When Klein returned to the street, he looked suspiciously out of the corner of his eye at the apartment with traces of an explosion.

With the mindset of just giving it a try, he put his hand back into his pocket, pushed the metal cigar case open, and stuck his hand inside.

He wanted to see if anyone was hiding in the apartment where the crime scene was located.

With a hum, Klein's head suddenly felt like it was being smashed as his body wobbled a little.

Like a drunkard, he staggered forward and looked at the apartment which had signs of an explosion.

As he was too far away, he couldn't "clearly see" the black lines, nor could he trace the source of the black lines. He could only barely distinguish where the black lines had gathered, and this indicated that there was someone present.

No, no, no... Klein quickly swept the area and made a rough judgment.

Suddenly, he noticed a black line floating out from the crime scene on the third floor which merged into the air!

This... Klein's pupils shrank, and he made a confirmation before quickly withdrawing his hands so as to stop being in contact with the All-Black Eye.

There's someone in the destroyed room!

That murderer is actually crazy enough to wait for investigators to come to the crime scene?

Isn't he afraid that official Beyonders will take over the case?

I made a wrong judgment and failed to find him because I shared a different sense of logic from that of a lunatic...

Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he slowly exhaled and pretended that nothing had happened whilst he walked in a circle until he reached the entrance of the apartment building.

By then, all the negative effects he had suffered from the AllBlack Eye had been quelled.

Controlling his facial expression and body language, Klein headed up to the third floor as if he were going home, his footsteps quick and heavy with fatigue.

In the darkness of the corridor, he caught sight of the doorless room which had half its walls collapsed. Then, he "casually" headed for the public bathroom.

As he neared the room, his hand, which had been in his pocket, touched the All-Black Eye.

Again, the mind-wrecking murmurs and the blurred hallucinations assaulted him. Through the corners of his eyes, Klein saw a black, illusory thread spread out from the crime scene.

As he traced the source, he found a man who had completely merged into the shadows. His aura was the same color.

The man was extremely tall, almost two meters in height. The corners of his mouth drooped slightly, making him appear rather eccentric.

His cold eyes were like those of a wild beast's, possessing a ferocity that couldn't be hidden.

It's not Lanevus... Klein withdrew his fingers, relaxed his body, and avoided the likelihood of staring. He entered the public bathroom at the end of the corridor without stopping. Nor did he alarm the man.

The public bathroom and the crime scene weren't on the same side. He wiped off his cold sweat, and after quelling the negative effects, he directly jumped out the window, climbing down skillfully before leaving with brisk steps. He didn't stay a moment longer.

He knew that in a few minutes the man would be alerted to the absence of someone who had gone to the bathroom, so he had to get as far away from the street as possible.

It wasn't that Klein didn't want to walk back the way he came from, but if he didn't know which room he could go to, it would similarly expose him.

The Clown quickly ran and circled around a huge area before entering that one-bedroom apartment he had rented in East Borough. He then went above the gray fog to confirm that there was no danger of him being caught.

That fellow must have had some sort of deep connection with Lanevus... After a moment's thought, Klein conjured a portrait of the man from earlier, sending his thoughts to the crimson star that represented Miss Justice.

Soon after, he said solemnly in a tone of authority, "This is a clue."

Chapter 282: This is East Borough

Inside the soon-to-be abandoned medical school building, Audrey suddenly felt adrift as she took a detour to leave the gathering which had just ended. She saw the familiar thick gray fog and the blurry figure situated in the center high above.

"This is a clue."

Accompanying Mr. Fool's solemn voice were scenes that looked like a film reel, a colored one at that!

A man who wasn't particularly muscular but was nearly two meters tall in height was wearing a black priest robe and standing in the shadows. His light yellow hair was slightly curled, and his dark brown eyes were cold with malice. The corners of his mouth drooped slightly, making him look like a ferocious wolf.

A clue? A clue to the bombing on East Borough's Dharavi Street and Gavin's drowning? Is this the murderer? Audrey stared blankly for a moment before immediately coming to an understanding.

Mr. Fool already has a clue... He's really impressive—No, he's omnipotent. After sighing to herself, she turned to look at Fors.

As soon as Fors removed her mask and surgical cap and got into the carriage, she noticed Miss Audrey's slightly strange gaze. She immediately asked in puzzlement, "Is there something on my face?"

"Nope." Audrey looked away and sat down before removing her disguise.

Fors recalled the gathering and asked curiously, "Miss Audrey, why didn't you announce that you were purchasing the Spectator formula? You could've established contact with the Psychology Alchemists that way."

She remembered that the generous Miss Audrey had remained silent most of the time and only sold some spirituality-infused materials and responded to buying other varieties accordingly.

Audrey smiled faintly and said, "This is my first gathering in this circle. I think it's more important to observe and wait.

"I'm looking forward to the potion formula and even more so, the mystical items, but I told myself that there's no rush. It would be a better strategy to familiarize myself before taking action."

This is also a 'professional habit' of the Spectator pathway. Moreover, there were no Beyonder ingredients like Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid or Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals which Mr. World wishes to obtain... Audrey silently added.

Looking at the girl who wasn't eighteen yet, Fors suddenly felt that she was more mature than ever before.

She suddenly laughed at herself and said, "If I had been like you back then, I wouldn't have wasted such a precious opportunity."

Audrey gave a reserved smile as a response before saying, "I'll ask some special friends in the morning if they have any leads on the Dharavi Street bombing. Wait for the information at the same place with Xio."

"Alright." Fors nodded without any doubts.

...

Instead of returning to Minsk Street, Klein slept in the onebedroom apartment in East Borough's Black Palm Street.

He was afraid that the suspected murderer in the black priest robe had accomplices who could be searching the streets for him.

Although the probability of meeting him wasn't high, and he had disguised himself ahead of time so that it was unlikely he could be recognized, his divination indicated that there was a possibility. To be cautious, Klein made do and decided to spend the night at East Borough.

At dawn, he changed into another dark blue worker's uniform, put on a light brown cap, and left the room. He went down the stairs and into the street.

At that moment, the white fog with a yellowish tint shrouded the surroundings. There were blurry figures of people passing by, and the cold morning air was soaking into their clothes.

Klein lowered his head and hurried along, just like the people around him who had gotten up early for work.

While walking, he saw a man in his forties or fifties ahead of him. He wore a thick jacket and had gray hair around his temples. He was pacing in place and fumbling for a cigarette while shivering. Finally, he took out a box of empty matches in his clothes' inner pocket.

Just as he opened the matchbox, his right hand quivered, and the crumpled cigarette fell to the ground and rolled in front of Klein.

Klein stopped, picked it up, and handed it to him.

"Thank you, thank you! I can't live without this old friend. There's only a few left," the man thanked him sincerely and accepted the cigarette.

His face was pale, and he appeared to not have shaved for quite a while. Exhaustion was expressed without reserve from the corner of his eyes as he lamented, "I haven't slept for another night, I don't know how long I can last. I hope the Lord will bless me so that I can enter the workhouse today."

He's a homeless person who has been chased away. Klein casually asked, "Why doesn't the king and ministers allow all of you to sleep in the park?"

"Who knows? But to sleep in this kind of weather outside, it's very likely that you'll never wake up again. It's still better in the day, since you can find a warmer place. Sigh, but this will make us lack the time or strength to look for jobs." The man lit a cigarette and sucked at it delightfully.

As though he had some of his strength restored, and he walked beside Klein. It was uncertain if his destination was at the end of the fog or somewhere deep into the fog.

Klein had no intention of exchanging pleasantries and was about to speed away from him when he saw the man, who had spoken clearly, bend down and pick up a dark object from the ground.

It looked like an apple core that had been nibbled clean.

The man swallowed his saliva before stuffing the dirt-covered fruit core into his mouth. He chewed it until it was mashed up before swallowing it down with great familiarity. Nothing was left.

Looking at Klein's surprised eyes, he wiped his mouth, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled bitterly.

"I haven't eaten in almost three days."

This sentence struck Klein's heart, causing him to feel indescribably moved.

He silently sighed and said with a smile, "Sorry, I didn't introduce myself just now. I'm a reporter, and I'm currently writing about homeless people. Can I interview you? Let's go to the café up front."

The man froze for a moment before he smiled and said, "No problem, it's much warmer inside than on the streets.

"If you can stay a little bit longer after the interview and let me sleep inside for half an hour... No, fifteen minutes! That would be even better."

Klein turned agape, momentarily at a loss for words. He just silently led his "interviewee" into the budget café at the end of the street.

The tables and chairs in the coffee shop were quite greasy. Due to the walls and windows inside, there were quite a few guests. The average temperature was indeed much higher than the streets.

The man scratched his throat, concealing his Adam's apple that was squirming from the fragrance.

Klein motioned for him to sit down and went to order two large cups of tea, a plate of lamb stewed with young peas, two loaves of bread, two pieces of toast, a serving of low-quality butter, and a serving of artificial cream for a total of 17.5 pence.

"Have some food to eat. We'll have the interview after you eat your fill." Once the food was ready, Klein carried them back to their table.

"This is for me?" the man asked with anticipation and surprise.

“Except for a piece of toast and a cup of tea, the rest is yours.” Klein smiled in response.

The man wiped his eyes and said with a slightly choked voice, “...Y-you truly are a kind-hearted person.”

“After starving for so long, make sure not to eat too quickly,” Klein warned.

“I know, I had an old buddy who died just like that.” The middleaged man worked hard at eating at a slower pace, occasionally lifting his cup of tea and gulping it down.

Klein easily finished the toast and watched quietly, waiting for the man to finish his meal.

“Phew, I haven’t eaten until I was this full in three months, no— half a year. In the workhouse, the food they give is just enough.” After a while, the man put down his spoon, leaving empty plates in front of him.

Pretending to be a journalist, Klein asked casually, “How did you become a tramp?”

“It was bad luck, I was originally a worker leading quite a good life. I had a wife, two cute children, a boy and a girl, but a few years ago, an infectious disease took them away, and I also stayed in the hospital for a long period of time, losing my job, my wealth, and my family in the process. From then on, I often couldn’t find a job, and I didn’t have any money to rent a house or buy food. All I could do was wander on the different streets and in certain parks. This made me very weak, making it harder for me to find a job...” the man spoke with a hint of nostalgia and sadness in his numbness.

He took a sip of his tea, sighed, and spoke again.

“I can only wait for an opportunity to enter the workhouse, but as you know, every workhouse only takes in a limited number of people. With good luck, and if I queue up in time, I can spend a few days in peace, recover my strength a little, and then find a temporary job. Yea, temporary. Soon, I’ll be jobless again and the previous process will be repeated. I have no idea how much longer I can last like that.

“I should’ve been a good worker.”

Klein thought for a moment and asked, “How many cigarettes do you have left?”

“Not many left.” The middle-aged man smiled bitterly. “This is the last of my assets, the only thing I have left after I was chased out by the landlord. Heh, one can’t bring them into the workhouses, but I’ll secretly hide them in the seams of my clothes. I’ll only take one out to smoke during my worst hardships so that I can have some hope. I don’t know how long I can last, but let me tell you, I was a good worker back then.”

Klein wasn’t a professional journalist and was momentarily at a loss on what to ask.

He turned his head to look out the window and saw faces with obvious hunger plastered across them.

Some of them were relatively sober and they belonged to the residents of East Borough. Some of them wore looks of numbness and exhaustion, nothing like that of humans. They were tramps.

There is no obvious gap between the two, the former can easily become the latter. For example, the gentleman in front of me... When Klein looked back, he discovered that the man had fallen asleep; his body curled up on a chair.

After a few minutes of silence, Klein went to pat the man awake and gave him a handful of copper pennies. “This is the payment for the interview.”

“Okay, okay, thank you, thank you!” The man didn’t realize what was happening, and when Klein reached the door, he raised his voice and said, “I’ll go to a budget motel and get a bath, get a good night’s sleep, and then get a job.”

...

At noon, Klein attended a party at the Sammers. There were ten guests.

There was apple juice with steak, roast chicken, fried fish, sausage, cream soup, lots of delicacies, two bottles of champagne, and a bottle of red wine.

On his way back from the bathroom, he met Mrs. Stelyn Sammer. He thanked her sincerely, “It was a sumptuous lunch. Truly delightful. Thank you for your hospitality.”

“It cost a total of 4 pounds and 8 soli. The most expensive were the three bottles of wine, but they were all part of Luke’s collection. He has a liquor cabinet.” The pretty Mrs. Stelyn smiled in response.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, she said, “You earned ten pounds from Mary’s matter alone, and if you can keep up the good fortune, you’ll soon be able to have a banquet like this. For people of our class, you have to invite friends once a month and also be invited by friends.”

Klein, who was already used to her mannerisms, obliged politely, “Well, I’ll have to wait till my income settles at four hundred pounds a year before I can be like you.”

Stelyn immediately raised her chin slightly and tried hard to make her smile faint.

“430 pounds, it must be 430 pounds.”

...

Dock area, East Balam Dock, Workers Alliance Tavern.

Xio wore boots that gave her height a huge boost and stuck on a thick beard, making herself look like a short man.

She tried to recall the portrait from Miss Audrey, trying to engrave in her mind the image of the man who might have been the murderer.

If Gavin had been killed by him, the murderer probably frequents this tavern... Xio ordered a glass of rye beer and a lunch set before huddling in a corner and eating slowly. From time to time, she would look around furtively in search of her target.

After a while, the tavern’s door was pushed open again, and Xio reflexively looked over.

With just one look, her pupils shrank so thin that they resembled needles as she nearly became petrified.

The patron who entered was nearly two meters tall!

Chapter 283: Dock Union

Xio has been in the bounty hunter business for a very long time. Many things were done on instinct without any thought.

When she saw the patron who entered was nearly two meters tall, she instinctively lowered her head and continued to eat her pork sausage and French fries as if nothing had happened.

Although the food entered her mouth, Xio didn't taste it at all. She endured dozens of painful seconds before she slowly raised her head and pretended to look around casually.

Soon, she saw that the patron who had just entered was sitting in front of the bar counter, waiting for his booze and lunch.

Soft, curly pale yellow hair, dark brown beast-like eyes, a slightly drooping mouth, an aura of solitude and malevolence... Little by little, the details came into Xio's eyes, overlapping with the image in her head.

It's him!

It's the suspected murderer!

The man who killed Williams!

Xio lowered her head again and slowly stuffed the rest of the food into her mouth.

After a few minutes, she set the tray down on the bar, along with the glass, and left the Workers Alliance Tavern without looking back.

Due to her high boots, they effectively masked the most obvious feature of her body.

Outside, Xio slowed her pace and found a secluded spot to observe the people entering and exiting the tavern.

After waiting for a while, she finally found an acquaintance, a technician named Burton, who lived in East Borough and worked at the East Balam Dock.

The young man liked to treat himself to a cup of shoddy rye beer at noon or in the afternoon, and his salary only allowed him to afford such a beer, and he couldn't drink it every day.

Xio nimbly darted over and patted Burton on the shoulder. She lowered her voice and said, "It's me, Xio."

"Xio?" Burton looked up and down at the short man and nearly failed to recognize him as the famous Arbiter Xio Derecha of the streets of East Borough.

"I have something to ask you." Xio pointed to a nearby corner.

Burton followed in puzzlement, only to come to a realization when he arrived in a secluded corner. "Are you doing a bounty mission?"

He had heard that Xio was also a bounty hunter.

"Yes." Xio nodded perfunctorily, fished out five pennies, and tossed them around. "Do you know that tall man at the tavern?"

"You mean the one that's this tall, has pale yellow hair, and wears a fierce look?" Burton gestured.

"Yes." Xio took out the folded portrait and unfolded it. "You have to be sure."

"That's him. He's been coming to this tavern often for the past two to three months. I've never seen him before that. He's very fierce, completely unreasonable, and he's good at fighting. It's best that you don't provoke him." Burton glanced at the portrait carefully and gave some sincere advice.

Yeah, when I saw that person just now, it was just like my encounter with a ferocious beast when I was young. I felt that I was in danger and wasn't a match for him, so I had to immediately avoid him... Xio secretly exhaled and asked, "Do you know anyone he's in close contact with?"

"No idea. He's not very sociable and he seldom speaks. We don't even know what his name is. We have given him a nickname, 'Giant.'" Burton curled his lips and shook his head.

Xio thought for a while before asking again, “Where else have you met him, besides the tavern?

“You can ask your friends the same question. Remember, it has to be a trusted friend.”

Burton recalled and said, “When I went to the Dock Union to do some work, uh—the East Balam Dock’s Dock Union, I would occasionally see him appear there. Xio, why aren’t you a member of the union? You’re so just, and those guys not only charge us 1.5 soli a week. But when the other docks go on strike, they’ll pay us half our salary just because we have to support our families!

“Lord, let’s just forget about it. In order to live a good life, we must help each other. However, once they organize a strike, they’ll come to an agreement with the lawyers sent by those rich people. Our situation doesn’t improve at all!”

“Stop, stop.” Xio lowered her right palm and said, “Apart from that, have you seen ‘Giant’ anywhere else?”

“No, my friends probably haven’t either. After all, we often discuss him in private,” Burton answered in a firm tone.

Xio didn’t say anything more and gave him five copper pennies.

“Drinks on me.”

“Don’t tell anyone about what I just asked. It’ll be very dangerous.”

Before she finished her sentence, she had already turned around the corner and headed towards the Dock Union located at East Balam Dock.

About ten minutes later, Xio saw the two-story yellow building.

She wore her canvas coat inverted and exposed the patches beneath, instantly transforming herself from a short worker to a tramp.

Xio looked at the homeless people huddled around the corner, pinched her nose, and went over to sit down beside them. She glanced at the Dock Union on the opposite side of the street where people were coming in and out.

As the minutes passed, Xio endured the cold and the harsh environment while tenaciously observing the situation around the Dock Union and the surrounding area.

She clearly remembered Williams's insistence on drinking, and she also remembered how she felt when she saw the newspaper that fateful day.

These feelings made her even more patient than usual.

At that moment, about eight people came out of the Dock Union, and they headed for the café across the street to have lunch in groups.

Xio narrowed her eyes and carefully scanned every passer-by to confirm their appearance.

There's no one suspicious... Xio was about to look away and wait for the next batch of people when the door to the coffee shop creaked and was pulled open as the heat from within rushed out. A man couldn't help but take off his gold-rimmed glasses and wipe away the fog with his sleeves.

Xio gave him a casual glance, and her gaze suddenly froze.

Those eyes!

That mouth!

It always had that taunting smile!

Lanevus? Xio jerked her head back, not daring to look again.

The man from before had bronze skin and short hair, and his face was craggy. He was very different from the portraits, except that his eyes and mouth gave her a familiar feeling.

It was the feeling of taunting everyone!

Is it Lanevus? Can it be Lanevus? Xio bowed her head and stared at the flagstones on the street.

...

At the Sammers.

After a sumptuous lunch, the hosts and guests gathered in the activity room to chat, and they agreed to play Texas together.

Interesting rumors and humorous stories echoed intermittently as Klein maintained his smile, interjecting from time to time. He also saw the Sammer family's two children entering and exiting energetically.

And next to him, Jurgen Cooper wore his usual serious expression, occasionally providing legal advice for the discussion.

Klein smiled, turned his body slightly, and asked in a low voice, "Are you bored?"

"No, their topics are very interesting." Jurgen nodded seriously.

Klein was stunned and blurted a question, "Then why don't you laugh?"

Jurgen frowned slightly and looked at him in puzzlement.

"Why are you smiling?"

"..." Klein's mouth twitched, not knowing how to respond.

He was about to make a joke about how much Jurgen was like his cat Brody, forever so serious, when suddenly he heard a series of ethereal pleas.

Female... Miss Justice has found useful information, so quickly, based on the clue I gave her? Klein stood up and slightly bowed.

"I need to use the bathroom."

In the bathroom, Klein locked the door, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

His judgment was very accurate, as the plea came from Miss Justice.

Klein suddenly felt nervous as he emanated his spirituality in anticipation and seriousness to listen to her words.

After the usual honorific name, Justice recounted truthfully, "They discovered the clue you provided at the Workers Alliance Tavern in the pier district's East Balam Dock. The person's nickname is 'Giant.'

"After tailing the Giant and figuring his in and outs, they discovered a person suspected to be Lanevus at the East Balam Dock's Dock Union.

"Temporarily, they don't dare to approach Lanevus because 'Giant' is very powerful and dangerous. They can only continue waiting for an opportunity.

"In the meantime, they've also asked if they could notify the police and collect the bounty after confirming that it's Lanevus."

Lanevus has a very powerful and dangerous helper. Does he have any other helpers? Is there a faction backing him? Why did he kill so many people? What was he planning to do by being in the Dock Union? A series of questions flashed through Klein's mind, making him feel that things were much more complicated than he had expected.

As for the last request, his answer was undoubtedly—yes. He would even suggest to the other party that they should inform the church of the Evernight Goddess directly because there was a possibility of the police leaking the information.

Getting the Nighthawks of the Church of the Goddess to kill Lanevus is also a form of revenge! Klein silently murmured to himself. He had a strong urge to immediately confirm that the man was Lanevus, lest things changed because he waited too long.

He took a deep breath, suppressed his emotions, and undid the spirit pendulum around his wrist on his sleeve.

"There is danger going to the Dock Union for confirmation."

Closing his eyes and chanting seven times, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the topaz pendant. He discovered that it was motionless, completely still.

The divination failed? Klein immediately frowned.

He changed the sentence he used, changed the divination method, but they all resulted in a failure.

After some careful thought, he thought of three reasons. First, there wasn't enough information to make a divination. Second, Lanevus wasn't at the Dock Union, making it difficult for the divination to

succeed. And, third, Lanevus was just like Ince Zangwill who had items that could shield against divination.

An item to shield against divination... A benefit he obtained from that god's spawn ritual? A little godhood of the True Creator? Klein thought for a few seconds, then decided that no matter what, he had to make a trip to the Dock Union.

There were certain things that needed to be done even though danger was a certainty!

If the two ladies were able to observe secretly without being seen, so can I... I only need to meet with Lanevus once and I can confirm it with divination...

Of course, I can't be rash. I have to prepare in advance. For example, I have to send the All-Black Eye above the gray fog and not carry it with me. That's to prevent the spiritual corruption of the True Creator from resonating with "His" godhood. Another example, I should elevate my height so that the "Giant" wouldn't be able to recognize me as the "passer-by" from last night from my figure. For example, I should find a suitable and sufficient reason to not arouse suspicion. Yes, I can pretend to be a reporter and head there for an interview. I'll visit Mike Joseph later and borrow his false reporter identification...

The corner of Klein's mouth slowly curled up as he blanketed his body with his spirituality before descending back into the real world.

Chapter 284: Instinctive Trembling

Three in the afternoon at the Dock Union in East Balam Dock.

Klein wore a thick sweater, a tan jacket, and a simple cap that brought him closer to the usual investigative reporters in style rather than the ones who attended banquets and interviewed people of status from time to time. Such a costume had cost him an extra 1 pound 10 soli.

At that moment, he was wearing gold-rimmed glasses, and his hair was neatly combed back, gleaming with the luster of hair oil. His face no longer had a messy beard, so he could only plaster a deep-black stubble around his lips. His height was at least five centimeters taller than before. He was trying his best to look different from the worker from last night, making it impossible for anyone who wasn't particularly familiar with him to make any associations.

In the pockets of his clothes and trousers, there was no All-Black Eye, no charms or herbal essential oils. There was only a deck of tarot cards, a stack of notes, a fountain pen, a wallet, some change, a bunch of keys, and false reporter identification documents.

He didn't know the Lanevus's current condition, nor did he know where the powerful Beyonder lingering around him came from. Hence, out of precaution, he didn't bring any suspicious items.

Looking at the two-story building ahead of him, Klein crossed the street, pretending to not rely on the Clown's intuition to notice that several pairs of eyes were watching him.

He pushed open the door and saw that the Dock Union's layout was rather simple. There were no female receptionist or spacious lobbies. The stairs to the second floor were in the middle, flanked by office corridors, and the floors weren't lined with wooden planks, much less carpet. They were paved purely out of cement.

Klein turned his head to look at the man guarding by the door as he went over and said, "I'm a reporter from the Backlund Daily Tribune. I would like to interview the workers of your association and get to know your needs and desires."

The man was wearing a very patched jacket which even had dirty cotton lining exposed and a linen shirt underneath.

After hearing the word “reporter,” he suddenly became vigilant and replied loudly, “No! We haven’t organized a strike lately, no!”

“I think you’ve misunderstood me. I’m someone who sympathizes with you. I’m planning on doing a special report on what the union does to help the workers and the actual difficulties they encountered. Trust me.” With the help of his Clown Beyonder powers, Klein made his eyes look abnormally sincere.

“Is that so... Go to Mr. Rand, our committee member in charge of publicity. Turn right, and it’s the second office on the right,” The man hesitated for a few seconds before replying.

“Thank you.” Klein bowed with feigned relief, and he felt the gaze observing him from a dark corner of the room vanish.

He turned to his right and, with his back perspiring in cold sweat, knocked on the office door.

The door creaked open. A middle-aged man with sparse hair looked at him and asked, “May I know who you are?”

“Mr. Rand? I’m Reporter Statham from the Backlund Daily Tribune. This is my reporter identification documents. I’d like to make a report with unions as the theme to help you acquire more attention.” Klein almost believed he was a journalist.

“That’s me.” The middle-aged man looked at the reporter’s identification documents and said hesitatingly, clearly unwillingly, “It’s hard for me to believe that you reporters are here to help us.”

“I was born in East Borough, and I know how miserable the lives of the workers are. If you don’t believe me, you can follow me the entire time and monitor my every question.” Klein suddenly smiled and added, “A report with actual interview data would be better than nothing, far better than news that’s written purely based on imagination. At least you can provide your views and hopefully guide things in the direction you want.”

Rand touched his scalp and replied hesitantly, “Alright then...

“I’ll follow you the entire time.”

“Thank you!” Klein almost lost control of his emotions.

Afterward, under Rand’s guidance, he entered one office after another, interviewing the members of the workers’ association according to his prepared questions.

Right corridor, nothing. Left corridor, nothing... Klein calmly went up the wooden stairs to the second floor.

This time, Rand led him into the office directly opposite the staircase and introduced the people inside, “This is a reporter from the Backlund Daily Tribune, Mr. Statham.

“He wants to interview the lot of you, but I have to remind you that there are some questions which you have the right to refuse to answer.”

Klein smiled, took two steps forward, and made a gesture to shake hands with each and every staff member in the room.

At that moment, he saw a slightly familiar figure.

Although the man’s skin had turned bronze, his ordinary round face had become angular, and his glasses had changed from a round frame to a gold-rimmed frame, Klein still found a trace of familiarity from his spirituality as a Seer.

Immediately afterward, his body trembled, and the smile on his face almost went out of control.

“I-I’m sorry. I suddenly have a stomachache. May I ask, where the washroom is?” Klein asked with an awkward smile, holding his stomach with the hand that didn’t hold a pen and paper.

Rand and the staff didn’t suspect anything. They all pointed to the door and said, “Go out, turn left. When you reach the end, you’ll see the sign.”

Klein smiled apologetically and walked out of the room, heading quickly for the washroom.

Inside, he selected the cubicle closest to the window, sat on the toilet, and locked the wooden door behind him.

He bent down, the corners of his mouth curving into a silent laugh. He laughed so hard he nearly couldn't keep his body straight. A drop of sparkling liquid fell onto the ground from his laughter.

Klein had confirmed that it was Lanevus!

This wasn't because of that small sense of familiarity, but because he felt another type of aura from the other party's body, one that left an extremely deep impression on him!

This was also the main reason why he had nearly lost control on the spot.

The trembling of his body originated from his instinctive fear!

The collapse of his emotions came from the horror and sorrow deep within his memories!

That was, that was... That was the aura of the True Creator!

...

Klein washed his face and went on with the interview as if nothing had happened. Even while facing Lanevus, who had somehow changed so much, he continued to ask questions and record the answers.

After finishing all of this, he bade farewell to the workers' association and walked out of the dimly lit building.

Outside, the sky was cloudy and misty, as if the evening had come early.

The True Creator's aura can only come from "His" body or spawn, as well as things that extend from the two. For example, items bestowed by "Him," or "His" godhood... This corroborates with what Lanevus said to Hood Eugen. In addition, there's that tinge of familiarity. I didn't even need to go above the gray fog for divination to confirm that it's him... If it wasn't for me having already interacted with the True Creator a few times and coming close to his mental corruption, there's no way I could've recognized that aura to be "His" which didn't contain any strength and of "His" nature... Klein felt heavy emotions, but he appeared very relaxed.

He stood on the street and purposely organized the interview notes.

In the process, he caught a glimpse of a slightly familiar figure among the tramps across him.

Miss Xio? Klein instantly made a guess with what he knew.

He didn't stop, and he put away the notes before walking towards the tracked public carriage station.

At this moment, a horse carriage suddenly stopped in front of him.

"We meet again." Sitting in the carriage was a thin, elegant, middle-aged gentleman with white hair at his temples. He was the great detective who was helping the police investigation, Isengard Stanton.

As for Klein, he didn't look any different than usual. He was just a little taller and had changed into a new set of clothes.

"What a coincidence, I was just thinking about the last time I interviewed you," Klein answered deliberately.

Isengard suddenly understood and changed the subject with a smile.

"I'm here to investigate a case. The death of Siber has been eliminated and I'm in charge of it. Her death is very close to East Balam Dock."

"So it's indeed a copycat crime?" Klein feigned ignorance.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he got into the tracked public carriage. Instead of going straight home, he made a transfer and headed to the Quelaag Club in Hillston.

In the Club's lounge, he quickly went above the gray fog to confirm that no one was following him.

Only at this step did Klein completely relax and feel some lingering fear.

The aura of the True Creator lingered in his mind like a nightmare, leaving the clothes on his back moist after they repeatedly dried.

To be sure, Klein conjured a yellowish-brown goatskin parchment and a dark red fountain pen before writing a divination statement he had already long thought of:

"The source of the inexplicable familiarity earlier."

Putting down his fountain pen and leaning back into his chair, he began to mumble as he entered the dream.

In that gray and illusory world, he saw a figure.

This figure had ordinary facial features. He wore round glasses, and he had a condescending and taunting smile from beginning to end. He was none other than Lanevus!

I've finally found you! Klein no longer used his Clown ability to control his facial expressions as he muttered to himself through clenched teeth.

Then, he sat up straight and prepared to answer Miss Justice's prayer.

Klein controlled his emotions and said in a deep but cold voice, "There's no need for confirmation.

"That is Lanevus.

"You can inform the Church of Evernight and tell them that Lanevus has the godhood of the Fallen Creator."

...

Audrey, who was watching her father train the hunting hounds with Susie, froze when she heard Mr. Fool's response.

Fallen Creator... Isn't that the True Creator? That swindler actually has the godhood of the True Creator? Th-this, such a simple mission actually involves the godhood of the True Creator!? As expected, I knew Mr. Fool had other deeper motives... He was targeting the True Creator. As expected of Mr. Fool! Many thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind.

Audrey, who had set up an urgent communication method with Xio and Fors, quickly passed on Mr. Fool's message to the two ladies through the huge golden retriever, Susie, claiming that the information she had received came via other sources.

In the corner of an old church, as Xio was thinking about how to confirm Lanevus's identity, or how she should create chaos and avenge Williams, she unfolded the ball of paper.

...There's no need to confirm. He's Lanevus? Xio's eyes widened as she quickly skimmed through the rest of the paper's content. The piece of paper clearly wrote:

"The only choice is to notify the Church of Evernight.

"Alert them that Lanevus has the godhood of the True Creator on him."

"Godhood? The True Creator's godhood?" Xio blurted out as she looked at the golden retriever in front of her in shock, only to realize that she was equally dumbfounded.

"What?" Fors was listening when she suddenly felt something was amiss. She hurriedly reached out for the piece of paper and scanned it.

After a moment, she curled her lips and said at a loss, "This... this must be a joke, right?

"How did we get involved in a matter that's tied to an evil god's godhood?"

This was meant to involve the capture of a cunning swindler worth only 200 pounds!

In response to Fors's question, Susie could only express the notion that she was only a dog and that she didn't know what was happening either with her innocent eyes.

Not expecting a dog to answer her questions, she turned her head to Xio and said, "I'm afraid Miss Audrey isn't as naive and innocent as we thought. She has many secrets.

“This might be a power struggle between a cult, the nobles and the Church.

“However, it’s evident that she didn’t know about the matter of godhood prior to this. She’s also being used by someone. Hmm... That person could be her father, Earl Hall.”

“What’s fortunate is that this matter ends here. You don’t need to take the risk anymore. After you get someone to make the report, you just need to wait to collect the bounty in peace.” Xio was startled and said, “That’s true...

“Hopefully, those Nighthawks are able to avenge Williams. They’re so strong, so they’ll definitely be able to do it.

Definitely...”

Before she finished speaking, she suddenly turned her head to the side and spoke as if she was talking to herself, “I’m still too weak.

“Too weak...”

Xio jerked her hand up, covering her mouth and nose.

...

I’m still too weak... If not for that, I would’ve chosen to take revenge myself, but right now I can only take a step back... Not to mention there’s ‘Giant’ and those hidden helpers around Lanevus. With just his godhood, he isn’t someone I can deal with... With the reaction speed of the Nighthawks, they’ll likely take action tonight once they receive the report. The Backlund diocese is second only to the Church’s headquarters. They have many Sealed Artifacts and many powerful Beyonders. There’s no need to wait for any additional helpers... After completing his task of informing Audrey, Klein returned to the real world. He stuck on a beard, changed his hairstyle, and stared into the mirror for several minutes.

He felt anticipation and excitement, as well as depression and a sense of powerlessness.

Before the evening arrived, he left the Quelaag Club and returned to Minsk Street. On his way, he went to the grocery market and found a

stall that was bustling with its great business. He bought several masks, including a clown's.

He had decided to watch the hunt for Lanevus tonight!

He wanted to see the other party pay the price for his madness with his own eyes!

Of course, with his strength, he could only watch from a distance and not even have the right to approach them.

By eleven o'clock, when many people were in their dreams, Klein changed into his grayish-blue worker's uniform and disguised himself as he had the night before. Then, he put on his cap, walked a few streets away, and took a rental carriage to the Backlund Bridge area.

Once there, he switched to walking and walked all the way to the East Balam Dock.

His interview yesterday included questions such as "where are you staying now" and "how's the environment like." Therefore, he knew very well that Lanevus would be staying in the dormitory provided by the Dock Union at night.

However, Klein didn't go near it. Instead, he carefully went around it. His target was the clock tower of the East Balam Dock.

In Backlund, in addition to the large church with its tall, iconic clock tower, many government buildings were also equipped with one. However, they weren't necessarily tall, grand, and not ornate. It was mostly built for pragmatic reasons, such as this one in the East Balam Dock.

Compared to the surrounding buildings that reached a maximum of three stories, it was like a giant that stood high in the night sky as it overlooked the entire area.

Klein easily entered the interior of the clock tower and went up the endless flight of spiral stairs as he moved quickly in the darkness.

Finally, he arrived at his destination. He arrived at the top of the gigantic wall clock. It was surrounded by a dark yellow fence, and at

the top of his head was a steeple that could be reached by stretching his hand.

Taking a few steps forward, Klein hid in the shadows, got a sense of his bearings, and looked towards the Dock Union's dormitory.

It was a two-story, brick-red building, and the occasional pedestrian resembled a black dot in Klein's eyes.

He stared for a few seconds, then took a step back, and sank into the darkness.

At the same time, he took out his newly bought mask and wore it.

It was a clown with the corner of its mouth sharply raised and a painted red nose.

A happy clown.

...

Wearing a clown mask, Klein stood in the rich darkness, patiently waiting for the predetermined show.

He waited for two hours.

When the hands of the large wall clock passed one o'clock, he suddenly saw something flying from the distance.

It was a huge airship covered in dark black paint!

If it weren't for the faint moonlight, it would've been indistinguishable from the night sky. Unlike what was described in the newspapers and magazines, depicting them as machines that emitted exaggerated mechanical noises, its oars rotated quietly, as silent as a vulture who had found its prey but hadn't found a chance.

The solid, light alloy supported the cotton frame, and below it hung the compartment for guns, projectile launchers, and cannons. At a glance, it appeared to be a powerful deterrent.

It's silent... Is this a temporary result caused by Beyonder means? Klein, wearing his clown mask, looked at the slowly descending airship and made a guess.

At this moment, he was most puzzled over the dispatch of an airship for a small-scale Beyonder battle in a densely populated area of the city!

Aren't they afraid of dealing collateral damage to the surrounding citizens? Aren't they afraid of causing panic?

Very soon, the airship hovered about 10 meters in the air. This way, Klein was even less worried about being discovered. His position was much higher than them!

Observing the situation below, he suddenly had a hunch. It was likely that the airship wouldn't engage in combat, but rather provide air surveillance of the area to give the personnel involved in the operation a better view and prevent the target from escaping if any accidents occurred.

Right at this moment, three figures dressed in black robes suddenly appeared in front of the two story brick-red building.

The man in the lead didn't wear a hat, revealing his short golden brown hair and blackish-green eyes which appeared to be as deep as a windless lake.

The collars of his shirt and trench coat were propped up high, and his palms were covered with a layer of gloves that were as red as blood!

A silver-white metal suitcase was wound around his left hand via a chain of the same color.

This was one of the of the nine high-ranking deacons of the Church of Evernight, Crestet Cesimir. He was also one of the three powerhouses of the Red Gloves and he happened to be in Backlund.

After looking straight ahead, Cesimir turned his head to the left and said to his subordinate, "Use Sealed Artifact 1-63."

"Yes, Reverend Cesimir." The Nighthawk crouched down and helped Cesimir untie the chain around the silver suitcase.

Throughout the entire process, Crestet Cesimir's muscles were very tense, as though he was fighting something.

The Nighthawk on the left took a deep breath and pressed down suddenly, causing the illusionary ripples on the surface of the silver box to crack.

The surrounding halo suddenly disappeared as if it was completely sucked into the case. A bone sword, that was less than a meter-long, emitted glossy, pure white light as it slowly floated up.

Its blade had an ancient silver-coated mirror attached to it.

The scenes reflected in the mirror were layered and superimposed without end.

The Nighthawk on the left took the mirror and pointed it at the brick-red building.

The building was clearly reflected in it, and nothing seemed to change.

However, Cesimir slowly exhaled, stretched out his left hand to grasp the short bone sword.

The surrounding halo was somewhat restored.

"Let's go in." He started walking towards the entrance of the brick building.

The three Nighthawks opened the door and entered the dark building and targeted the stairs that led to the second floor.

At that moment, a tall, thin figure emerged from the shadows in the corner. He wore a black priest's uniform, and he had curly, pale yellow hair and beastly dark brown eyes.

"You're the Goddess's Sword?" The nearly-two-meter-tall "Giant" spoke in a deep voice.

At the same time, he clenched his right palm.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Union members in this small brick-red building exploded one after another in their dreams, without even having the chance to scream.

Their bodies split into pieces, turning into thick, sticky flesh. Half of their bodies rushed towards the "Giant" to weave into cloaks that could

reduce magical damage. The other half condensed into furry giant rugs that blanketed the three Nighthawks.

Crestet Cesimir only watched silently without doing anything.

Silently, the flesh and blood dissipated and collapsed before falling down like rain, but the raindrops didn't stain the floor red.

In each of the rooms, figures emerged once more, still sleeping soundly.

"This is the world within a mirror, a mirror world that only targets Beyonders. The flesh bombs you planted in the bodies of the ordinary people are only illusions in here." Cesimir raised the Holy Artifact bone sword in his right hand, causing the light around him to disappear.

"Hmph!" the "Giant" suddenly grabbed his left shoulder with his right hand and tore off his arm. He then threw the blood arm forward!

Boom!

His arm exploded like a bomb, turning into a rain of blood that rained down on the three Nighthawks.

At the same time, the flesh on his left shoulder began to squirm madly as he slowly grew a new arm which was still bloody without any skin.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Sizzle!

The blood-colored raindrops accurately avoided Cesimir and the others before falling to the ground and quickly corroding into deep, dark traces.

But no matter how hard they tried, they always missed the three Nighthawks by a hair's breadth, as if they were fated to do so.

"My enemies aren't always lucky enough." The corners of Cesimir's mouth curled up, and with a slip of his foot, he instantly appeared in front of "Giant."

Giant's eyes narrowed as his body suddenly melted like a candle, turning into sticky flesh and blood that quickly seeped into the floor.

Cesimir immediately kneeled and plunged the Holy Artifact bone sword into the ground.

"No!"

In the rich darkness, a roar filled with pain and horror instantly sounded, and it was immediately swallowed up by tranquility and serenity.

Cesimir stood up and drew out the bone sword. A drop of dark red blood was slowly dripping down its tip, and on the floor, flesh and blood were seeping out, congealing into a face of despair. It was precisely the "Giant" who had a slightly drooping mouth.

Pat! Pat! Pat!

Three shadows appeared around Cesimir in succession. However, they all mysteriously collapsed to the ground, having been forcefully taken down by many invisible entities!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Another Nighthawk fired, and the silver surface of the bullet seemed to bear the Evernight Sacred Emblem.

The three attackers hiding in the shadows suddenly revealed themselves, twitching as they lost their breath.

"Rose Bishop, Shadow Ascetic... People from the Aurora Order." Cesimir frowned and said in a low voice without turning to his companions, "There's something wrong about this. It's very strange. All of you be careful."

Before he could finish his words, he heard the shuffling of footsteps which echoed in the silence and serenity.

Immediately, he saw Lanevus with his chiseled face dressed in a linen shirt walking down the dark staircase. He appeared calm and placid without any signs of fear.

"I'm very curious. To the Aurora Order, you should be a blasphemer. Why would they send people to protect you?" Cesimir didn't seem to notice the abnormality as he asked casually.

Lanevus showed his trademark taunting smile and said, "That's simple.

“Because I’m no longer just Lanevus.”

He paused for a moment, and his gaze suddenly turned cold.

“Now, I’m even more of the True Creator!”

He yanked open his linen shirt, revealing the dark red flesh of his skinless chest and abdomen.

The flesh and blood were conjoined together, forming the figure of a hanged man!

All of a sudden, the void around them shattered like glass, and all the scenes around them crumbled.

This was the aura of a deity.

Chapter 286: A Taunting Smile

In the clock tower of East Balam Dock, Klein hid in the darkness while donning a clown mask as he quietly stared at the dormitory of the Dock Union. An airship floated above.

He couldn't see the details of the battle, and he had no way of knowing the developments of the operation in the red-brick building. All he could do was endure and determine the situation by observing the changes in the surroundings and the occasional black dot that passed by.

Just then, he saw all the gas lamps in the area extinguish.

All of them had been extinguished!

It was pitch black there!

Right on the heels of that, a feeling that left an extremely deep impression on him exploded from the small red-brick building. Even from a long distance away, Klein couldn't help but tremble all over; his legs went soft, and he bent his waist.

It was the feeling of being looked down upon, a feeling that repressed one's spirit.

It was a feeling that was Nimpossible to resist or face!

D-do not look directly at God... In his adrift thoughts, Klein seemed to recall the time when he was in the hall of the Blackthorn Security Company. It was like when he was about to activate his Spirit Vision to probe the mental state of Megose and the baby in her womb.

That feeling was exactly the same as it was now!

No, it's even more extreme and terrifying right now!

How could this be? Wasn't Lanevus just bestowed with a little bit of the True Creator's godhood? At most, he would be given one or two other corresponding items! Why does it feel like an evil god is about to descend?

Before Klein could shake off the trembling of his body and the numbing of his thoughts, he suddenly felt a deep, serene, and profound

darkness engulfing the feeling that couldn't be looked at, probed, or resisted.

The two sensations were obliterated at the same time, causing the gas lamps in the surrounding area to light up once again. The airship which couldn't stop itself from plummeting floated back up again.

Everything seemed to return to its original state, without the slightest change.

But Klein didn't believe that everything was over. He stood up with all his might, knowing that something important had happened in the red-brick building.

The feeling that exceeds a Beyonder, at a fundamental level, is no longer there, nor is there the feeling of the descent of an evil god. This means that the True Creator or Lanevus's plot has failed... However, the Nighthawks must've suffered some sort of serious blow as well. They might not even have much strength left... At that moment, Klein's heart stirred. He quickly took out the spirit pendulum inside his left sleeve, holding it with one hand as he said in a low voice, "Lanevus is no longer dangerous at the moment."

After quickly repeating it seven times, he opened his eyes and saw that the topaz pendant was rotating counterclockwise. However, its frequency wasn't fast, and its amplitude wasn't large.

This showed that Lanevus was still a dangerous man but to a lesser degree.

What caught Klein's attention was something else.

The divination hadn't failed again!

This meant that Lanevus had been separated from the godhood bestowed upon him by the True Creator!

A cold wind blew, seeping deep into Klein's bones, causing him to shiver. He felt as if an electric current had instantly drilled into his brain from the soles of his feet.

Maybe I can do something! He suddenly had this thought and no longer hesitated. He took four steps counterclockwise in the dark clock tower and went above the gray fog.

Without wasting any time, he sat down and conjured a piece of yellowish-brown goatskin parchment and wrote a divination statement:

"Lanevus's escape route."

Klein leaned back, quickly chanted the statement, and entered a deep dream.

In that illusory, separated, misty world, he saw the slush-filled sewers with their dark, dirty tunnels and rusty metal pipes.

It was cramped and sealed.

It's the sewers!

Klein immediately woke up, enveloped his body with spirituality, and descended into the gray fog.

As soon as he returned to the real world, he took a few steps back and came to the side of the clock tower that faced away from the airship.

Klein didn't walk down the spiral stairs but instead somersaulted over the dark yellow fence. With the help of the platform, the bulging spots, and the decorations on the surface of the building, he jumped down level by level, his body was so balanced it was if though he was walking on the ground.

In a very short period of time, his feet stepped on the thick flagstones on the street.

...

Inside the small red-brick building, two Nighthawks wearing red gloves had collapsed by the door unconscious. The ancient silverplated mirror had rolled to a corner, but it was no longer special. It no longer looked anything like a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

However, one could clearly feel that it was recovering bit by bit.

Crestet Cesimir was kneeling at an intersection, a stream of tear-like blood streaked down the corners of his eyes.

His short, golden-brown hair hung limply, and his standing collars on his trench coat and shirt were in tatters, revealing his relatively sharp chin and his thin, stiff mouth.

Gasping for air, a distorted, semi-illusory, and translucent face appeared on each of his teeth.

Cesimir braced himself with his left red-gloved hand on the ground, with difficulty, he straightened his neck and looked straight ahead.

Directly in front of him was the staircase to the second floor, above which stood Lanevus who had his linen shirt completely unbuttoned.

Lanevus stood very straight, with the pure white, smooth bone sword stuck in his chest.

The skinless flesh no longer formed the outline of the hanging man's figure, leaving behind a void.

Vaguely, one could even see his back through the hole in Lanevus's body.

Lanevus moved with great difficulty before suddenly laughing loudly. He said with a maniacal laugh, "Haha, haha, thank you!

"I really need to thank you!

"For real. Look at my sincere eyes. I really want to thank you!

"If you hadn't discovered me and arrived in time, I would truly become the vessel of the True Creator when 'He' descends in a few months. When that happens, how different would it be from dying?"

Cesimir was stunned when he heard that. He refused to believe that the person who had his crutch destroyed thanks to his hard work would be so happy.

At that moment, he wished to stand, but he couldn't. He was also powerless to resist.

When Lanevus saw his confusion, he coughed and said with a smile, “Do you know? To people like me, it’s the most miserable thing when there’s no one to share a great accomplishment that I’m proud of.

“Cough, when I was in Tingen City, I was deceived by the True Creator who not only initiated the descent of his spawn, but he also secretly planted a ‘sapling’ in my body.

“No, I even believe that Megose’s child was just ‘His’ ruse. ‘He’ didn’t even get the members of the Aurora Order to protect her to divert attention. It was as though ‘He’ knew from the beginning that the ploy would end in failure.

“‘His’ true descent was set up inside me. The godhood ‘He’ bestowed upon me suddenly combined with the ‘sapling’ in my body after I reached Backlund. Haha, can you imagine that? I was being replaced bit by bit by ‘Him!’ In the end, I would become the True Creator.

“Before I came up with a solution, I was found by the members of the Aurora Order through the godhood. Thankfully, they’re all lunatics with simple brains. Haha, there are always so many

fools.”

Cough! Cough! Cough! Lanevus spat out a mouthful of foul blood, seemingly recovering some of his mobility.

He took a difficult step forward, and his chiseled face suddenly turned soft for some unknown reason as he began resembling his original self.

Lanevus reached out to the staircase’s handrail and laughed tauntingly.

“Thankfully, if the True Creator wishes to fully descend and completely replace me, He’ll need large amounts of pessimism, despair, numbness, resentment and primitive evil. Only Backlund—only East Borough, the factory and dock area, could satisfy His requirements. This gave me a chance to interact with others.

“I knew that it was unrealistic to report this to the police simply through the people I interacted with because the people I come in contact could very well be members of the Aurora Order.

“I initially wanted to instigate a strike to get the police to notice me, but I was warned by someone from the Aurora Order. After being tortured, I could only hastily end it.

“I acted as though I was on the brink of losing control and had gained the opportunity to head into the sewers to vent. During this process, I secretly used my blood to corrupt the creatures living in there, turning them into terrifying mutated monsters. Unfortunately, before you could fully investigate the reason behind it, it was discovered by the Aurora Order. Apparently, a member of theirs died under a mutated monster. Sigh, now that I no longer have the godhood or the sapling, my blood no longer has such effects.

“After that, I was controlled even more strictly, but I still found an opportunity. I killed a prostitute and used the cruelest method to attract the attention of the police, but who would’ve thought that the people of the Aurora Order would disguise the case as part of series of serial murders? I still failed to receive the rescue I needed.

“Out of similar opportunities, I could only use a more ingenious method. I took the initiative to request for the fiercest, craziest, most radical member of the Aurora Order to watch me, and this suited their thoughts. Hehe, can’t they use their brains? Such a lunatic would get into trouble at any moment. As expected, you guys came!”

Phew... At that moment, Lanevus exhaled and began to move his body, as if he had finally gotten rid of the remnant effects.

He pulled out the holy bone sword from his chest and said regretfully, “What a pity. I can’t take it with me; otherwise, I would be quickly tracked and found by you.”

After the pure white bone sword completely separated from his body, not a single drop of blood remained from the exaggerated wound. The part that had disappeared didn’t seem to belong to Lanevus.

Lanevus pressed his right hand against his chest, bowing as he faced Crestet Cesimir and company.

“The people on the airship outside should be recovering soon. I can’t stay any longer.

“Thank you, thank you very much.

“Although you’re all very stupid, you still ultimately helped me.

“It’s an honor for foolish bastards like yourselves.”

Having said this, he straightened his body and smiled tauntingly, “Goodbye, foolish Nighthawks.

“Use your lives to send me off.”

Grasping the bone sword in his hand, he abruptly took a few steps forward, attempting to stab at Crestet Cesimir.

But at that moment, his eyelids began to grow heavy, as he felt like collapsing into a slumber.

“So you still have some strength. This is troublesome...” Lanevus bit his tongue gently and suddenly threw the holy bone sword at the unconscious Nighthawk by the door.

“No!”

Cesimir waved his hand with the strength he accumulated through painstaking means, causing an invisible entity to divert the holy bone sword.

Lanevus seized that opportunity and dashed to the side. He somersaulted out the red-brick building through the window at the washroom at the end of the corridor.

Soon after, he opened a manhole cover along the streets and quickly climbed into the sewers.

Lanevus seemed to be very familiar with this place. Even though it was dark, he could still run, jump, and turn, quickly fleeing deep into the maze of sewers.

Suddenly, he instinctively stopped and leaned back.

Oof!

A card had stabbed deep into his right chest and blood began dripping profusely from its edge.

Lanevus looked up, and with his ability to see in the dark, he saw his attacker.

It was a medium-sized man in a worker's uniform, wearing a mask with a raised mouth and red nose.

It was a happy clown.

The moment their eyes met, Lanevus suddenly ducked and rolled forward.

Clang!

A tarot card, with an angel and trumpet, shot out sharply like a dagger, embedding itself into the wall of the sewer, and its position was at the same height as Lanevus's neck just moments before.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Lanevus either rolled, jumped to his side, or threw himself forward, nimbly avoiding the three cards that came in succession with abnormal agility. Their collision with the walls, slabs, and concrete echoed like metal striking a wall.

Meanwhile, out of the corner of his eye, he saw that the man in the clown mask was following him closely, not much slower than he was. In his hand was a thick stack of cards as he launched them with great familiarity and skill.

On the surface of an approaching card was a sun with five facial features. With his left hand, Lanevus propped himself up against the wall and leaped into the air, drastically changing his course.

At that moment, he heard a swishing sound before suddenly feeling a sharp pain in his ankle!

He launched two cards? One arrived slightly late and was aimed in the direction I was escaping in? Can he foresee my movements? The moment he landed on the ground, Lanevus endured the pain and rolled once again.

Clang!

Another tarot card embedded itself into his original position, resonating constantly in response to the impact.

It was only then that Lanevus noticed a card deeply embedded in his right ankle. The card depicting stars, water containers, and holy water stained in red.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Lanevus didn't even have the luxury of time to think or treat his injuries. One after another, the cards turned into seemingly sharp flying daggers, shooting at different parts of his body.

Very soon, the injuries on his right leg and chest, and the remnant effects from the hole in his chest, as well as the prior demigod level clash caused this Sequence 9 Marauder to turn sluggish. This was in contrast to the nimbleness and speed that Marauders were known for.

Pow! He sent a card flying, but a deep laceration tore through his wrist, one that kept bleeding profusely.

The Nighthawks and the military will be coming soon. I can't delay any longer! At this moment, Lanevus's mind was very clear.

Suddenly, he stopped in his tracks and stopped dodging, allowing a card depicting the devil to strike him squarely in the neck.

In almost an instant, the cards sticking out from his body were sent flying. The hideous wounds on his neck, right chest, wrist, and ankle were all squirming madly, sprouting one meat tendril after another in disgusting shapes!

On his skin, numerous small goosebumps appeared. These goosebumps had a metallic tint to them as if they had turned into a set of armor.

Clang! A tarot card was shot over, but it was deflected by the fine goosebumps.

With bloodshot eyes, Lanevus stared at the Clown who had put away his cards after coming to a halt. He said, half laughing and half mocking, "No matter what, after being tormented by a deity, one will always get something in return."

Before he could finish his words, he had already jumped over the polluted waters in the canal with his left foot, throwing himself at the enemy opposite him.

As if expecting this, Klein stepped to the side, pulled his left hand out of his pocket, clenched it into a fist, and threw it at Lanevus's temple.

Bam!

Lanevus swung his elbow sideways and raised his forearm, accurately hitting his opponent's fist.

The explosive force surged like a torrential tide, causing Klein's body to move from the impact as he staggered a little.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

Crisp explosive blasts sounded in Klein's ear. Punches, each heavier and faster than the last, constantly reflected into his eyes.

The flurry of attacks made him seem to forget to maintain his balance. He staggered and fell to the side, then, with the support of his left elbow, he rolled in a different direction.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Lanevus's punches and kicks came quickly and furiously, almost hitting Klein quite a few times, but thanks to his exaggerated balance and movements that defied common sense, he managed to dodge successfully. At times, he would be on the wall and at other times, on the ground. It was as though he was performing an acrobatic act.

He appeared very calm without the slightest bit of impatience. It was as though he had decided to drag out the battle as long as possible until the Nighthawks and the military arrived.

And once there were any signs of Lanevus's attempting to escape, he was hell-bent on pestering him and not give him an opportunity to do so.

Pa!

Lanevus's punch forced Klein to use the rebound from the wall to fly back into the air, and as for him, himself, he didn't hesitate to turn around and flee towards another tunnel.

The moment Klein's toes touched the ground, his body shot out like a cannonball as he pounced straight for Lanevus's back.

At that moment, an image appeared in his mind.

"It seems as if Lanevus has no bones. I should force him to twist his upper body and land a punch on his body." This was a Clown's intuition!

Without any doubts or hesitation, Klein took the initiative to reduce his subsequent strength.

With a smacking sound, he still threw himself forward, but it was much weaker than he expected.

Kacha!

With a jarring noise, Lanevus twisted his upper body suddenly while his legs remained immobile. His face faced backward as his toes pointed forward.

In such a terrifying scene, Lanevus threw a punch towards Klein's head. The force of the punch was so strong that even the air produced an explosive boom.

Boom!

His fist hit nothing but air, and his fist was still twenty or thirty centimeters from Klein's face.

The winds, that stirred from the punch, blew through Klein's hair, but he didn't take the opportunity to attack the enemy. Instead, he croaked a single word in ancient Hermes, "Crimson!"

A charm? Lanevus scrunched his face as he immediately jumped to the side in a bid to dodge the impending attack.

However, Klein had yet to throw out the charm. Instead, he clenched his left fist tightly and followed in the direction of Lanevus.

He similarly threw himself to the side and rolled on the ground as well, causing the distance between them to only widen slightly.

It was a bluff? Just as this thought flashed through his mind, the highly-raised corners of the Clown's mouth were clearly reflected in his eyes. There was also a dark red flame which had unknowingly ignited in the Clown's left fist.

This... Lanevus's gaze immediately froze.

A light crackling sound entered his ears, and a calm, tranquil feeling emanated instantly, enveloping him and Klein.

What is he trying to do? He wants both of us... to be affected at the same time... to allow for... the Nighthawks and military... to rush here in time... Lanevus's eyelids drooped heavily, and the fatigue and weakness he had been suppressing began to rear their heads uncontrollably.

He did his best not to fall asleep, hoping to rely on the uniqueness of his body to endure through the most intense period of the charm's slumbering effects.

As for Klein, he didn't choose to resist at all and quickly entered a deep slumber.

However, whenever he fell asleep unnaturally, he would instinctively wake up!

This was the unique thing about him when fighting mediumship and dream invasions!

This was the reason why he had been lucky enough to escape from the hands of Madam Sharon back in Tingen!

In the fight just now, after throwing his cards proved ineffective, he immediately took out the Slumber Charm and gripped it tightly in his palm, waiting for the opportunity to affect himself and his enemy!

In just a split-second, he forcibly broke free from the abnormal state of mind in his dream. The figure of the staggering Lanevus was clearly reflected in his eyes.

Phew! Klein suddenly became very calm, as though what was before him was nothing but a target.

He took a deep breath, turned his waist, and pulled back his shoulder before thrusting his fist forward with all his strength!

Bam! Kacha!

His fist landed ruthlessly at Lanevus's throat, breaking his bones and splattering his flesh.

Lanevus took two steps back and leaned against the wall.

That intense pain finally allowed him to extricate himself from the slumbering effects, but the fine iron-colored goosebumps on his body were all gone.

After Klein's punch landed, he reached into his pocket with his left hand and pulled out two cards.

Sou! Sou!

The two cards each stabbed into an eye as scarlet liquid gushed out.

Lanevus surprisingly endured the pain without letting out a tragic cry. Instead, he abruptly threw himself forward in a bid to make his last stand!

Klein didn't take advantage of the situation to attack. Having long expected this, he turned his body to the side and took a step back.

Right on the heels of that, while seizing the moment when Lanevus's fell forward, he took two steps and arrived behind him. He reached out with his arms and grabbed his enemy's neck.

Kacha!

Klein's arms exerted force, and he suddenly turned around, twisting Lanevus's neck!

After doing all of this, he took two steps back and looked at his enemy.

With the card embedded in him, Lanevus looked ahead weakly as he slumped to the ground. At the same time, he was very confused and asked in a staccato manner, "Why... do you... want

to... kill me..."

With his clown mask on, Klein stared at his archenemy and replied indifferently, "No reason."

"No..." With his eyes wide open, Lanevus collapsed to the ground in the sewers, unable to accept his fate. Finally, his breathing came to a stop.

At that moment, Klein, who seemed to be extremely calm, suddenly stepped forward, tightened his right leg, and, with all his strength, kicked him in the head.

Bam!

His neck, which was already badly mutilated, could no longer bear the pressure and was sent flying like a rubber ball. It slammed heavily into the wall, creating a red and white patch!

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly crouched down.

“Hahaha, hahaha!

“Hahahahahaha.”

He laughed crazily with a suppressed voice. The “clown” mask looked so very happy.

The corners of those raised lips, the bright red nose, and that white face wore a very happy expression.

“Haha, haha... Hahaha...” Klein laughed so much that he went out of breath; his laughter was more jarring than crying.

After a few seconds, he finally calmed down. He slowly straightened his body and winked with his left eye at the darkest part of the sewer. Then, he smirked and muttered to himself, “Captain...

“Look, we’ve saved Loen once again...”

Droplets of liquid quietly slid down and landed on his collar.

At that moment, he felt that his Clown potion had been digested completely.

Chapter 288: A Scene Filled with Symbolism

In the dark sewer, Klein wiped his neck and turned his attention back to Lanevus's cracked head and decapitated body before turning to the two tarot cards that were stuck in Lanevus's eyes.

He originally wanted to retrieve all the projectiles that he had thrown and wipe the scene of any clues. However, he realized a very real and extremely serious problem.

He didn't have the vision to see in complete darkness.

He had relied on his Spirit Vision to rush through the pitch black sewers and engage in the intense battle with Lanevus!

He could see the colors of Lanevus's aura, the spirituality radiance of all sorts of critters, and could faintly use the lights "illumination" to distinguish the path.

Unfortunately, the tarot cards he was currently using weren't the same as the ones that had originated from the Nighthawks. It didn't have any spirituality or silver engravings, and it was completely ordinary with no special characteristics.

In such an environment, Klein could use his own aura's color and spirituality radiance to create a tiny radius around him where he could distinguish things. However, he couldn't see the cards stuck in the walls and ground, as well as the cards that had scattered everywhere. In the intense battle with Lanevus, they hadn't restricted themselves to a particular spot.

Of course, he believed that as long as he had enough time, it wouldn't be difficult to find all the cards he had thrown out, but the main problem was that the Nighthawks and the military on board the airship would arrive at any minute!

I can't be too careless regarding this... I've been wearing gloves all this time... This deck of tarot cards was bought before coming to Backlund and is standard across the nation... I don't usually use it... Most of the time, even if I have it with me, it's placed together with Mr. Azik's copper whistle... Regardless of what methods are used, it would be very difficult to locate me through them. At most, they would be able to

restore a portion of the battle scene; I donned a mask, and my shoes are padded... All sorts of thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, and he quickly came to a decision.

He turned to the headless corpse and crouched down. Reaching out with his black-gloved right hand, he quickly searched for any items left behind.

Klein didn't have the intention of carrying out a mediumship ritual. Firstly, the feeling of the evil god's descent had left a deep impression on him, so he didn't dare to blindly channel Lanevus's spirit unless he brought it above the gray fog with him. Secondly, with the situation of the Nighthawks and military arriving at anytime, he didn't feel that he had enough time to set up the ritual of summoning himself, responding to himself, and then going up above the gray fog and channelling the spirit.

I should give up when it's necessary... Klein silently muttered to himself, and he withdrew his hand from Lanevus's body.

This crazy swindler seemed to be in a hurry when escaping. He didn't bring any cash, materials, or charms. He only had an eyesized badge on him which coruscated a faint spirituality radiance.

Klein wasn't afraid that this item could be used to locate him as he planned on throwing it above the gray fog later to study it slowly. Therefore, he stood up and put the badge in his pocket.

He stole a glance at Lanevus's corpse, and without waiting for the Beyonder characteristic to appear, he used his left blackgloved hand to remove the remaining tarot cards.

Then he stretched out his left arm and placed his palm directly above the Lanevus's corpse.

All of a sudden, Klein released his grip, allowing the tarot cards to fall, like leaves cascading over the headless corpse. Some of them faced up with pictures and numbers printed on them, whilst others had dark red patterns on their backs.

After doing all of this, Klein took out Azik's copper whistle and tossed it a few times. Then, without looking back, he ran deep into the sewers.

After almost two minutes, figures finally arrived at this place. Some of them were wearing thick black trench coats, while others were wearing well-tailored military uniforms.

The leader of the group was Crestet Cesimir, who was carrying a pure white bone sword. His red gloves were smeared with dust, and his determined face showed obvious signs of fatigue and frailty.

They stopped a few meters away from the body, and through the means of their night vision, they could see Lanevus's corpse and his head against the wall.

There were two tarot cards stuck in his head. One was The Emperor and the other was Wheel of Fortune.

The headless body was covered with even more cards, each separately depicting The Chariot, The Hermit, Death, and more cards of different suits comprising of chalice, scepters, etc.

On the walls and on the ground around him, there were also tarot cards such as The Devil, The Sun, and Judgment.

It all looked like the scene of some bizarre ritual, and Lanevus was the sacrificial offering that was destined to be sacrificed.

Crestet Cesimir drew a silent gasp as he knitted his brows tightly. The Beyonders around him fell into a momentary daze at the sight of this frightening and mysterious scene in the darkness.

...

Far away from the scene of Lanevus's death, Klein quickly found an exit and left. He took off his clown mask and, in the shadows of the gas lamps, walked quickly towards East Borough.

Before that, he had already dealt with the stains on the soles of his shoes.

It was only when he reached Black Palm Street in the East Borough did he breathe a slight sigh of relief. Then, he quickly held the ritual of summoning himself inside his rented onebedroom apartment and responded to himself.

In his spiritual body state, Klein moved all the clothes he had worn tonight, as well as the remaining charms, herbs, and essential oils, as well as the badge he had obtained from Lanevus to the space above the gray fog. Then, he used a spiritual flame to burn the corresponding clues.

Phew... He exhaled and finally had time to take a look at what the badge he had taken from Lanevus looked like.

This badge was only the size of an eyeball. On the front was a symbol that depicted fate and concealment, and behind it was a ring of tiny and compact words in ancient Hermes.

"You can join if you have this item."

What does it mean? Was Lanevus also a member of some secret organization? Klein rubbed his temples. In a situation where he was physically and mentally exhausted, along with the fact that the timing wasn't right, he decided to give up on his research and leave it til after the Tarot Club's gathering.

He quickly left the mysterious space above the gray fog, changed into another set of clothes, and removed his disguise.

However, he was in no hurry to return to Minsk Street. He planned to sleep for the night before leaving. This was because it was easy to be inspected after midnight, especially when such an accident had just occurred.

He lay down on the bed, looked out the window at the moonlight's encroaching of the darkness, and gradually calmed down.

After completing his initial revenge, he felt that he had relieved himself of a lot of his burdens and lost a lot of his pressure. His mental state was clearly much better than before.

The present me isn't capable of handling Ince Zangwill and Sealed Artifact 0-08. Besides, the gap between us is huge. Only after becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder, a demigod, would I have the qualifications to involve myself in such matters... Before advancing to Sequence 4, I'll act as though they don't exist...

Yea, for the foreseeable future, my goal is to work hard to improve myself. Now that I've completely digested the Clown potion, I can advance to Magician once the Beyonder ingredients are gathered.

There's still Faceless, Marionettist, and the corresponding Sequence 4 which I don't know the name of.

Other than that, I'll just be an ordinary detective.

Klein's mind was calm and peaceful, and his thoughts were scattered as he thought about his future arrangements. He was no longer cranky or that depressed.

As he thought about it, the corners of his lips curled up slightly as he silently muttered to himself.

Captain, Benson, Melissa, I believe all of you would prefer to see me like this...

...

At dawn, a group of people wearing surgical hats and white masks came to the Dock Union's dormitory. They were all dressed as doctors.

The elder in the lead appeared to be rich in experience as he said to the puzzled and confused residents, "We've discovered an infectious disease in this building. A person named Kevin has already passed away because of it.

"We will provide free treatment. This infectious disease has a special drug, and as long as you take it in time, you'll be fine."

"Kevin?" One by one, the guests exclaimed in astonishment as they looked around for their colleague named Kevin. However, they didn't find him at all.

That was Lanevus's alias.

Seeing that the charity medical team was accompanied by police officers, the residents no longer had any doubts and began to line up nervously to collect their medicine.

The first was a middle-aged man with a bushy beard. He nervously asked all sorts of questions, afraid that a single bottle of medicine wasn't potent enough to fight off the infectious disease.

It wasn't until the doctors showed their impatience that he drank the blue bottle of medicine.

Then, he was helped to the side and aimed his mouth at a hole that was of the same size.

Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

The man suddenly felt nauseous as he violently vomited a putrid blob of a bloody substance.

He was about to prop himself up and cast his gaze to see what he had just vomited when two strong nurses yanked him away.

The mouth-sized hole was located above an iron-black metal barrel. The bottom of the barrel was dark and deep, with almost no light coming from it.

And right there, a pool of yellowish-green liquid was quietly resting at the bottom. In the middle of the pool was a small piece of blood-colored meat.

Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

One by one, the residents took the medicine and vomited in front of different metal barrels.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

"Why did you suddenly visit so early?" Audrey looked at the sky outside, then she looked at Viscount Glaint.

Glaint looked around and only found a golden retriever sitting beside him. Hence, he whispered, "I was planning to go to the turf club, but I met Kance on the way. He told me something very interesting. It's truly interesting. Since I was passing by here, I thought of coming to share it with you."

"What is it?" Audrey asked with interest.

Glaint didn't deliberate over his words as he replied, "You should've heard of the Aurora Order, right? It was the Aurora Order that assassinated the Intis ambassador. They were caught, with several important members killed, and a very large ploy was foiled as a result."

I thought it was something related to the godhood of the True Creator. Xio and Fors sent someone to report the information yesterday evening, and it just so happened that an operation was held last night... Wait, the Aurora Order apparently worships the True Creator! Audrey's eyes lit up. She pressed in a reserved tone, "What ploy?"

"I don't know, Kance refused to say. He just told me that the person in charge of this ploy was once a wanted swindler, a swindler named Lanevus." Glaint spread out his right hand.

As expected... Audrey nodded indiscernibly. She didn't conceal her curiosity and asked, "Was he caught?"

"He's dead, but he wasn't killed by our people." Glaint paused for a moment. "This is what I meant by interesting. When his body was found, it was covered with many tarot cards. Same for the surroundings. You can imagine that scene..."

Tarot cards? The body was covered with tarot cards? Audrey was startled at first before it hit her.

This was done by our Tarot Club!

It was Mr. Fool's Blessed!

Audrey, who thought she knew the truth, couldn't help but imagine the scene described by Viscount Glaint.

Lanevus lying in the mud in the darkness, covered with rows and rows of tarot cards. There's The Fool, Justice, The Hanged Man, The Sun, The World, and the other Major Arcana cards and numerous numbered cards. They would either be overturned or facing right up, and there would be some left unturned, exposing only their backs, as if they were all part of a large-scale, eerie tarot divination.

This kind of scene must be very shocking!

I wonder where the card for Justice landed...

How would the Beyonders of MI9 and the Church view this matter? Would they believe that a new secret organization has appeared?

By possessing the godhood of the True Creator, the ploy between Lanevus and the Aurora Order must definitely be significant. It definitely would've brought a terrible disaster to Backlund and the kingdom. Yet, this ploy was so easily foiled because of a simple mission Mr. Fool had issued!

This is a tussle at the level of deities?

Mr. Fool and the True Creator are considered archenemies?

It's no wonder He calls the other party the Fallen Creator...

Many thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind as her body trembled faintly and imperceptibly.

"What are you thinking about?" Viscount Glaint, who was sitting opposite, finally couldn't hold it in any further as he asked in puzzlement.

Audrey abruptly snapped out of her reverie. Slightly cocking her head, she smiled and said, "Didn't you tell me to imagine the scene of the corpse being covered with tarot cards?"

“Haha.” Glaint awkwardly smiled and sighed. “I wonder which secret organization’s member killed Lanevus. It really matches how I imagined such things to be like. It’s so—so cool!”

It’s our Tarot Club! Audrey answered silently as she smiled. “Perhaps there’s no organization, but the independent act of a powerful Beyonder?”

“Regardless, I like this style! Urge Xio and Fors and ask them when they can find my Apothecary formula,” Glaint said in excitement.

Audrey widened her eyes slightly. Looking around her, she lowered her voice and said, “Hush, keep it down.

“How can you talk about potions here?”

Glaint gave an indifferent smile. “Don’t worry. it’s nothing. I had already confirmed that other than you and me, there’s only a dog.”

The huge golden retriever, Susie, unconsciously shifted her position.

...

North Borough in Backlund. Inside a room beneath the Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Daly, who was wearing a black hooded robe and make-up with blue eyeshadow and red blush, gave off a charming yet cold feeling. She randomly found a seat and picked up the document on the table.

She swept through it before her gaze suddenly froze. Her brows immediately furrowed, and she suppressed something as she asked, “Lanevus?

“Why wasn’t I informed of this matter?

“Why didn’t you inform me about the operation last night?”

Sitting at the seat of honor, Crestet Cesimir, who had hidden his chin and lips back into his propped up collar, said deeply, “I was afraid that you wouldn’t be able to control your emotions. That would’ve brought unnecessary danger to the operation, so I didn’t get anyone to inform you.

“I can understand how you feel. A Nighthawk from the Tingen squad is currently undergoing guidance and training at the Holy Cathedral. He plans on joining the Red Gloves, and his performance is about equal to yours. But as the person in charge of the operation, and as a high-ranking deacon of the

Nighthawks, I had to eliminate all unstable elements.”

Daly looked at the other Nighthawk Squad Captains and deacons, and she sneered.

“Why do you think I won’t be able to control my own emotions? I’m very calm and I won’t act rashly!

“My anger will only erupt after Lanevus is caught! This is the professional bearing of a veteran Nighthawk and a deacon!

“If I had caught Lanevus, I would let him know that men can be weak too! I would make sure that a cold, rotten, yet stiff corpse would be situated behind his buttocks. I would make sure that a pungent white bone filled with thorns would be situated in front of him. I’d make it so that those cold little fellows enter and leave his body wherever they can!

“Damn it! You actually managed to let him die just like that!”

Crestet Cesimir looked at Daly calmly and sighed after silently listening to her until she was done.

“How long have you been putting up with it?”

Daly froze, then muttered in frustration, like a deflated ball, “For a very long time...”

Cesimir retracted his gaze and cast them towards the other deacons and captains.

“Got anything?”

“From our preliminary investigations, the person who killed Lanevus is a member of the Secret Order, a Sequence 8 of the potion name, Clown. He’s adept at using paper cards as flying knives.” A deacon reported based on the findings. “However, we are unable to confirm this guess. The tarot cards scattered across the corpse don’t seem like

they were concealing something. After all, the Beyonder didn't deal with the cards on the wall and in Lanevus's head. We all believe the final scene was more of a ritual or a symbolism. Therefore, we suspect that the Beyonder might belong to an organization we don't understand. Of course, the scene might also just be a personal preference of his."

Cesimir nodded slightly and said, "We can start from that point and proceed with a follow-up investigation.

"Aiur, any updates on the person who tipped us off?"

The charming middle-aged man, Aiur Harson, flipped the papers in his hand and said, "We investigated the person and discovered that his actions were directed by a bounty hunter.

"In the process of looking for the wanted criminal, Lanevus, the bounty hunter's companion was killed by a member of the Aurora Order. In order to exact revenge, she secretly carried out an investigation and eventually locked onto the target at the Workers Alliance Tavern in East Balam Dock. Based on the target's actions and lifestyle, she discovered Lanevus.

"Her actions have basically been verified by witnesses. There isn't anything strange about it. We also used Beyonder means to confirm that she has no connection with the person who killed Lanevus.

"She's in hiding now, and it's very hard to find her."

Cesimir added while seemingly in thought, "This fits very well with Lanevus's description, that the radical and insane members of the Aurora Order were helping him out.

"Is there any problem with the reporter who did the interview at the union that afternoon?"

Another captain of the Nighthawks reported, "He was a fake reporter, and according to news from the police department, he's actually a private detective who had previously helped Mike Joseph of the Daily Observer. Joseph was investigating the murder of Siber. We suspect that he got some kind of lead, found the Dock Union and disguised

himself to get in touch with everyone who was suspected of being the killer.

“This guess has already been confirmed by Isengard Stanton.”

Cesimir acknowledged it before switching to ask about other people who had recently come into contact with Lanevus, but similarly got answers that there was nothing wrong with them.

Towards the end, he said after some deliberation, “I’m very confused by the lack of motive for the murder of Lanevus. That mysterious murderer deserves our attention. You should continue to follow up on this matter.

“In addition, according to common sense, the Aurora Order definitely wouldn’t only have Beyonders at the Rose Bishop and Shadow Ascetic level in a big city like Backlund. There should at least be an Oracle, or perhaps even a Saint.

“Their ploy of receiving the True Creator’s descent has failed. With their crazy and irrational traits, I’m worried that they’ll launch a series of retaliatory acts. All of you are to be on high alert in the near future. I’ll also be staying in Backlund.”

“Yes, Reverend Cesimir,” the deacons and captains replied solemnly.

Crestet Cesimir paused for a few seconds before adding, “The events of the Megose incident in Tingen and last night’s incident with Lanevus have revealed a problem. The industrial area, the dock area, and East Borough have become hotbeds for the descent and nurturing of evil gods. You are to send people to investigate and gather the truth about the situation.

“If it truly is as Lanevus had described, I’ll raise this matter at the Council of Cardinals, formally exerting pressure on the kingdom and the government to bring about the corresponding changes as soon as possible.”

...

Klein slept in and didn’t wake up until it was late. However, it still wasn’t bright enough outside. The area was still shrouded in fog, making it dark and cold.

This doesn't fit with my splendid mood... He grumbled. After changing his clothes and taking his key, he returned to Minsk Street unnoticed.

After changing from his worker's uniform to casual home attire —a shirt and sweater—and after confirming that no one came investigating his identity as a private detective, he was completely at ease. He leisurely went out to the butcher and grocery store to buy food in preparation for a sumptuous lunch for himself.

There was some afternoon sun in Backlund, and Klein lazily basked in its worth, momentarily having no desire to do anything.

He waited until fifteen minutes to three, then he took out his golden pocket watch for a glance before returning to the bedroom and going above the gray fog.

After conjuring the fake World and familiarizing himself with its controls, he sat down on the high back chair at one end of the table and gave a message to The Sun that he was to prepare for his participation in the gathering.

At precisely three, according to Backlund time, streaks of crimson light soared out of the vast and ancient palace, outlining blurry figures which were equally indistinct.

Audrey directly looked towards the seat of honor and said cheerfully, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool.

"The 'simple' mission you entrusted has been completed."

She had deliberately emphasized the word "simple" in order to ascertain from Mr. Fool whether Lanevus had really been eliminated by his Blessed. She wanted to know if the tarot cardcovered death scene was a symbol of the Tarot Club.

Klein deliberately acted composed as he said with a smile, "I'm already aware."

After saying that, he sighed.

"In such an age, in such a place like Backlund, in such a place in the East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, they're the hotbeds for an evil god's descent."

What? Alger was stunned for a moment, wondering if there was something wrong with his ears.

Why would a simple mission involve hotbeds for an evil god's descent?

I remember that the simple mission given by Mr. Fool was for the sole purpose of examining two people for their candidacy of joining the gathering. The general idea was to find the person in the portrait, and that person was confirmed to be in Backlund... Alger Wilson tried to remember what had happened the last gathering, and he couldn't understand what it had to do with the hotbed of an evil god's descent.

Wasn't it just the search for someone?

Furthermore, it was the kind of task which didn't pose much of a threat...

Was there a deeper purpose behind Mr. Fool's simple mission? Was this a silent contest between deities?

Many thoughts went through The Hanged Man's mind instantly, and he almost couldn't stop himself from asking Justice, tempted to pay in order to understand what exactly was going on.

However, as a veteran official Beyonder, a Seafarer who steered an ancient ghost ship, he was experienced and shrewd. He forcefully suppressed his impulse and planned to go through the internal channels of the Church of Storms to find out about the recent events in Backlund.

As for Audrey, she instantly understood what Mr. Fool's sigh meant. She immediately understood the entire situation regarding Lanevus.

So it turns out that the bit of godhood that Lanevus possessed was the basic foundation for the descent of the True Creator into the real world... The harsh situation in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory area, however, was a hotbed that provided "Him" rapid nurturing and strengthening... With a simple mission, Mr. Fool stopped the True Creator's great conspiracy and saved the whole of Backlund! Audrey looked towards the end of the long bronze table, her eyes sparkling brightly. Unconsciously, she brimmed with admiration.

At this moment, the gloomy and reserved World let out a chuckled and said, "Yes, every time I see and hear about a large number of child laborers dying in their teens, and how most workers rarely live past

thirty due to extreme exhaustion and the terrible environment, or how after barely surviving the previous tests and as a result of their old age and the loss of their jobs, they can only wander the streets and die of hunger and cold, I have no doubt about the existence of an evil god. These gods are on the ground, in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory area.

"Well, there's even been a report that some factory workers have a hard time surviving five years.

"In the East Borough of Backlund, there's a saying that among the people who live there, without exception, any person who's a grandfather must be from the countryside.

"The meaning of this sentence is that people living there won't have a third generation as they can't have grandchildren.

"Poverty and hunger make their children very thin. Work that's difficult to adapt to causes them to quickly wither away in Backlund, much less getting married and conceiving the next generation."

This was the first time Audrey heard Mr. World speak so much. She was suddenly plunged into deep shock and confusion.

Why don't I know anything about this... The newspapers and magazines I read only mention that the residents of East Borough are having a hard time... This is far worse than being laborious... Audrey's eyes lost their focus for a moment. She felt as if her understanding of the kingdom and the world had been completely overturned.

Suddenly, she understood why Mr. Fool had uttered such a sigh, and why in such an age, such a Backlund, in such an East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district were the hotbeds of an evil god's descent.

We can't go on like this! Otherwise, Backlund will one day be destroyed because of this! Audrey felt a strong urge to go back and learn more, to remind her father, Earl Hall. She wanted to use the powers of a Spectator and a Telepathist to secretly guide the governmental policies that would improve the lives of the pitiful people in East Borough, the docks area, and the factory district.

At the end of the long bronze table, Klein quietly observed Miss Justice's reaction.

He had purposely lamented a while ago and used his smurf, The World, to give a detailed explanation. He wanted this noble, one who still had a semblance of purity to realize the seriousness of the problem and use her to push for change in the kingdom.

Before I become Faceless, I must clearly remember that I cannot be personally involved in such matters... He silently set such a boundary for himself.

"Thank you, Mr. Fool. Thank you for saving Backlund. Your sigh has made me understand the problem at its roots. Thank you, Mr. World. You have made me understand a great deal of the situation I didn't know in the past." Audrey held back her emotions and sincerely thanked the two gentlemen at the two ends of the table.

"Saved Backlund?" Alger was no stranger to the conditions of East Borough, the factory district, and the dock area. He was more surprised by the description Miss Justice had used.

Just how huge was this matter? he thought with an extremely puzzled frown.

The Sun, on the other hand, listened quite attentively, and although he couldn't understand all of it, he still listened attentively, hoping to learn more about the regions where Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and Mr. World were located.

Klein only smiled in response to Miss Justice's gratitude and didn't do anything further. He then turned to look at The Hanged Man.

Alger immediately understood what he meant, and he quickly conjured the last page of the promised Roselle's diary.

Klein received it out of thin air and took a casual glance at it.

"14th January. I discovered a problem. If unconscious HighSequence Beyonder objects are not sealed, they would unconsciously attract nearby Low-Sequence Beyonders from the same pathway, causing them to come into contact with each other. The higher the original Sequence, the more likely that this will happen.

“However, this situation doesn’t seem to be a constant. It seems to be intermittent.”

This diary entry immediately jolted Klein to attention because he had made similar guesses before.

After he came to Backlund, he soon found himself intertwined with the Secret Order, with a Beyonder of the Seer pathway, and thus, found himself in an extremely passive and extremely dangerous situation. However, he had also obtained the corresponding Sequences 7, 6, and 5 potion formulas as a result.

At the time, he had suspected that his transmigration involved secrets that gave him the power to resurrect, and that he would occasionally attract people and objects related to the Seer pathway, such as the Antigonus family’s notebook or members of the Secret Order.

After seeing this diary entry of Emperor Roselle, Klein suddenly had a new idea.

He used the corner of his eyes to scan the thick gray fog and the illusory dark red stars below him. He muttered to himself in silence.

Could it be that the one who created that attractive force wasn’t me, but this gray fog, the mysterious space above the gray fog?

This could also be considered as a secret behind my transmigration...

Without any further clues or information, Klein quickly gathered his thoughts and read the second diary entry.

“16th January, the taste of a Demoness ain’t bad.”

... The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched, unsure of what expression he should show.

Emperor, I have underestimated you... There’s really nothing stopping you... Don’t you care about the other person’s previous gender? Don’t you care about her experience during the “Pleasure” phase?

Suppressing the urge to exhale, Klein looked at the last entry in the diary in his hands.

“20th January. I finished making the second Card of Blasphemy.

“Let me think, let me think, where should I hide it?

“Yes, I plan to disguise it as a bookmark and insert it into a very valuable book. If the person who obtains it isn’t someone fated, it would be hard to imagine that the most valuable thing in the book is actually that seemingly ordinary bookmark!

“Not bad, that’s a good idea!”

...Emperor, why can’t you explain more clearly? Which book did the “bookmark” go into? Before I read this, I was so happy thinking that I can follow the clues and obtain a Card of Blasphemy containing the profound secrets of the deities... Klein was disappointed and let his gaze linger on the last paragraph.

I hope that there will be more specific information in the future entries of the Emperor’s diary... He comforted himself with this sentence, leaned back, and said with a smile. “You can start your discussion freely now.”

At that moment, The Sun Derrick raised his hand, having learned it from Miss Justice, and said, “Mr. World, the Beyonder weapon you gave me far exceeds my expectations. I’ve already accumulated enough contribution points to trade for the ingredients to advance to Sequence 8. I’ll use the remaining contribution points to hire helpers to obtain a chance to obtain the true root and juice of the Mist Treant. I’ll be able to complete the deal soon.”

He explained in great detail, worried that his reputation of keeping his word would be suspected and destroyed.

Of course, he was telling the truth. Although the axe didn’t match some of his expectations for a Beyonder weapon, its power shocked him.

That axe can create a powerful lightning bolt in just two or three strikes, and with the temporary boost from my Bard’s powers, I can easily fight in close quarters with a Sequence 7 monster. If I were to encounter a monster that’s afraid of lightning, I could even easily finish it... I’m now a Light Suppliant with a certain level of magical spells. My strength has been raised qualitatively, and I can fight against even

more powerful monsters... Derrick Berg felt that he had fallen in love with that Beyonder weapon.

In the City of Silver, its potency was one of the reasons to like it! The surrounding darkness and monsters in the depths of the darkness forced them to obey this rule for generations.

"Alright." The gloomy World nodded under Klein's control.

He then looked around and asked again, "Lady, Sirs, do you have any clues regarding the Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid or Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals?"

Audrey shook her head without hesitation. After musing for a few seconds, Alger suddenly said, "There will be a grand event held on the Sonia Sea soon. Ships from the four Pirate Kings and the six Pirate Admirals will be participating. Heh, I should call them the seven Pirate Admirals. Another person has joined the ranks.

"There'll definitely be transactions of Beyonder ingredients at such an event. It's very likely that the not-very-rare Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid or Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals will appear.

"I have the opportunity to participate in this event, but what can you offer in exchange?

"I'm sure you don't have the potion formula for Wind-blessed and that it'll be very difficult for you to find it in the future too."

High probability of appearing... Klein controlled The World and made him laugh deeply.

"Yes, I really don't have the potion formula for Wind-blessed, nor will I have the means to obtain it anytime soon.

"However, I have an incomplete formula for a Sequence 4 potion.

"Even though it's incomplete, I think you should know its value very well. It can be exchanged for at least 10,000 gold pounds, and most of the time, you can't even buy it with money worth several times that. This is a crucial step that will lead to a human's qualitative change.

"So, are you interested? The spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther is worth between 500 and 700 pounds and the Spring of the Elves marrow crystals is between 300 and 400 pounds. I believe you'll still need to prepare an additional 9,000 pounds in cash or an item of equal value."

Klein had long since speculated that the sequence of the Sun Sequence pathway, Unshadowed, could be swapped with the same Sequence of the Sailor and Reader pathways, and this conjecture had been indirectly confirmed by Mr. A's request and in the information provided in Roselle's diary. It was even suspected to extend to the Secrets Suppliant and Spectator Sequence pathways.

Therefore, he believed that the incomplete formula of Unshadowed was an irresistible temptation for The Hanged Man who was from the Sailor pathway.

It doesn't matter if you don't have something worth 9,000 pounds for the time being, you can pay it in installments with Mr. Fool bearing witness... Klein silently added.

Currently, he was lacking the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther, so he didn't mind letting The Hanged Man remain on credit. In any case, he didn't need to worry about the possibility of him running away.

Well, there are also latent risks. I would be at a huge disadvantage if Mr. Hanged Man suddenly dies... With such an expensive deal at hand, Klein couldn't help but feel a little apprehensive.

The incomplete formula of a Sequence 4 potion? An incomplete formula that leads to the path of a demigod? This is something that you can't even buy with money! Audrey's eyes lit up. She couldn't help hiding her curiosity as she asked before The Hanged Man could speak, "Mr. World, can I ask which Sequence 4 pathway the formula pertains to? If it's not convenient to tell me, pretend I never asked."

Mr. World actually has a Sequence 4 potion formula. Even if it's incomplete, it's still very shocking... No wonder Mr. Fool pulled him into the Tarot Club! He isn't a simple Beyonder... Well, Xio's and Fors's test mission has come to an end. Mr. Fool didn't mention if he's letting them join. Well... He must have other considerations, and maybe he needs more time to observe them. I shouldn't take the initiative to ask since it will appear impolite... Many thoughts ran through Audrey's mind at that moment.

Miss Justice's question was just what Klein wanted. He made The World reply in a husky voice, "I was planning to say it anyway.

"It's the potion formula to Sequence 4 of the Sun pathway, Unshadowed."

The Sun pathway? Derrick instantly looked towards Mr. World, who sat at other end of the long bronze table, his eyes filled with sudden eagerness and longing.

However, he maintained his silence because he knew that he was still far from the threshold of a demigod. He had to spend his limited resources to strengthen himself first.

Only caring about the near future was the way the City of Silver operated. This was because, to its residents, there might not be any future at any moment.

"Unshadowed..." Audrey nodded gracefully, then happily said, "Thank you for your answer, Mr. World!"

She felt like she had learned something important again.

“Unshadowed...” Alger muttered slowly before calmly replying, “I’m sorry. I have no need for it.”

No need for it? Klein was taken aback.

This was completely different from the script he had imagined!

In his shock, he indirectly caused The World to pause, looking incredulous. It took quite a few seconds before he said, “You can first owe a portion. With Mr. Fool as witness, I believe you’ll definitely make up for the rest.”

“No, I really have no need for it.” Alger shook his head.

No need for it... He really has no need for it... He’s confident that he would gain the favor of the Church of Storms and be bestowed with the corresponding potion directly? Or does he actually have the Sequence 4 potion formula to the Sailor pathway? The name was Cataclysmic Interrer? Klein quickly thought of two possibilities.

What should I do? Don’t tell me that I should trade the Witch or Demoness of Pleasure formulas with him? Klein silently mocked himself, deliberately making The World silent for a few seconds before saying, “Other potion formulas, or some secrets I know?

“Such as... secrets of the peak-level Sequences.”

Alger changed his seating posture a little as he deliberated before answering, “I personally know some secrets of peak-level Sequences. How will you guarantee that there’s no overlap? How will you guarantee that the secrets you will tell me is equal in value to the Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid and Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals?”

“We’ll each give the peak-level Sequence secret to Mr. Fool and let ‘Him’ decide if there’s any overlap and determine their values. Mr. Fool, is that alright?” Klein manipulated The World and asked himself this question.

Then, he said with a supercilious attitude, “Sure.”

Alger slowly nodded. “I have no problems with that. Let’s begin.”

I really want to know the secret of the peak-level Sequences... But I haven't had any extra money lately to buy it... Audrey looked enviously at The World and The Hanged Man as they each conjured a piece of goatskin parchment.

Having never worried about money since she was young, she finally experienced the taste of "poverty."

Very soon, Klein received the content written by the two members.

Without a doubt, he first looked at the goatskin parchment from The Hanged Man and discovered that the content was simple. There was only one sentence.

"The peak-level Sequence conceals the path to divinity."

Phew... Great. Otherwise, there would be a need to use other information for the exchange... Klein carefully examined The World's goatskin parchment before chuckling softly.

"It doesn't overlap.

"To most Beyonders, the secrets Mr. World is providing is of no value, but in the eyes of others, it's extremely important. This cannot be measured with money."

Hearing this conclusion, Alger immediately fell into a dilemma.

To him, getting two Beyonder ingredients at the same time wasn't a small burden. He had to sell many valuable items in order to trade for them.

To pay such a price to hear a secret that might not be very useful to him? Alger considered it for nearly twenty seconds before saying, "Mr. Fool, can you provide more hints? I can't make a decision yet."

Can't make a decision? The corner of Klein's mouth moved slightly. He knew that the words he had said to maintain his image had the opposite effect and had been ineffective. He hesitated for a moment and then smiled.

"The content he describes is a detailed supplement to the secret you know."

Detailed supplement? A detailed supplement to the path to divinity? Alger didn't hesitate any longer. He turned his head to look at The World and said in a terse and firm voice, "Deal."

Then, he immediately added, "I'll help you exchange for the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther and the Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals within the week.

"Of course, the premise is that they'll appear at the pirate's meet. Although the probability is very high, we still have to believe that anything could happen. If that happens, I might have to postpone it to next week, the following week, or even the next month. But don't worry, I will keep my promise."

"No problem. With Mr. Fool as witness, there's no need for me to worry," The World answered hoarsely.

After they had confirmed the transaction, Klein conjured a goatskin parchment in front of The Hanged Man.

Alger lowered his head eagerly, reading through each word voraciously.

"There is a Sequence 0 above Sequence 1!

"And Sequence 0 is the Sequence of a True God!

"They can similarly be reached through the corresponding potions and rituals."

Sequence 0? The Sequence of the True God! Alger was astonished and shocked at first, but soon he felt relieved, and then he murmured to himself in delight, *I see...*

I understand, I understand what it means!

He inhaled silently and leaned back in his chair as if nothing had happened.

That secret must be astonishing... Mr. Hanged Man even lost his composure... Audrey looked away with a longing expression and said to The Sun who was diagonally opposite her, "Mr. Sun, I remember you mentioning that the City of Silver has the Dragon pathway's Sequence 9, 8, and 7 potion formulas?"

“Yes.” Derrick nodded honestly. “Sequence 7’s potion formula is Psyche Analyst.”

“If I wish to get it, what is the price I need to pay?” Audrey asked in a reserved manner.

“The Sequence 7 potion formula of the Sun pathway,” Derrick replied without any hesitation.

Audrey nodded gently and said, “I’ll do my best to obtain it.” *Hmm... Xio and Fors mentioned before that there’s a Beyonder of the Sun pathway at Mr. A’s gathering. He’s at least Sequence 7 and is adept at purification and exorcism. Once all the recent events settle down, I can attempt to get it from him... In addition, I should join more of the gatherings at the abandoned education building in that hospital. I should try to come into contact with members of the Psychology Alchemists... One of the two paths will definitely lead to something...* Thoughts flashed through Audrey’s mind, but she suddenly realized that she was unable to obtain it even if she discovered clues to the formula.

This was because she would be experiencing a financial crisis for the next few months and was barely holding on.

The price of a Sequence 7 formula is around 800 pounds, so if I scrimp, I should be able to produce that. Hmm... It’s already October, it’s almost new year’s. I’ll be an adult then, and I’ll have the freedom to handle a lot more of my money... Or should I use the knowledge I was taught by Mr. Fool to trade? I wonder what attitude “He” has towards this kind of behavior... Audrey’s thoughts gradually dispersed.

She decided to wait until there was hope for the formula before she asked Mr. Fool.

The transaction segment came to an end. Klein originally wanted to use the knowledge he knew to exchange for a mystical item without many negative effects, but after sensing how tight The Hanged Man was, he knew that the other party would pay a large price for those two Beyonder ingredients. It was unlikely that he had any extra assets, so he could only give up in regret.

As soon as the free exchange segment began, Alger took the initiative to mention, “Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos’s ship and crew was subdued, giving rise to a new pirate admiral.”

Audrey was interested in the pirate admiral and asked, "What's his name? What was his current title? There hasn't been any related news in Backlund." Alger nodded slowly.

"She's a lady and was a famous pirate in the past. You should've heard of Ailment Maiden Tracy, right?"

"No, I don't know much about such things." Audrey shook her head in honesty.

Me too... Sitting at the end of the table, Klein added inwardly.

Alger fell silent for two seconds, and without wasting any time explaining, he said, "In short, she subdued the crew of Qilangos's crew last month. She proved herself with actual action that she had the strength of a pirate admiral. She changed the name of Qilangos's ship to Black Death and calls herself Vice Admiral Ailment.

"In the past, she acted independently and was someone who specialized in curses, black flames, and ice. Her enemies would always suffer from sudden ailments of various kinds. At present, no one knows which pathway she belongs to, but they're certain that she's at Sequence 5."

Audrey listened with relish. She blinked her eyes and requested curiously, "Mr. Hanged Man, can you introduce the four pirate kings and the other six pirate admirals in detail? I've only heard of their names and titles, but I don't know what Beyonder powers they are equipped with."

Alger looked around and saw that both The Sun and The World were showing signs of attentiveness. He nodded slightly and said, "That wouldn't be an issue."

"The strongest pirate king is the King of the Five Seas, Nast. He claims to be a descendant of the Fourth Epoch's Solomon Empire. Not only is he a High-Sequence Beyonder, but he possesses the terrifying ghost ship 'Black Emperor,' a relic of the empire. He's adept at using 'order.' He can pull his enemy into combat, in a domain that he's best at, and create fascinating effects...

“He’s also the oldest pirate in the world. Rumor has it that he’s over a hundred years old, and he has been active in the Five Seas since the Roselle era. No one knows exactly how old he is.

“Of course, compared to the other pirate kings, there’s a lot of information about him. As for the owner of Dawn, all we know is that she’s a beautiful woman. She was once a Warlock and is now a demigod. She calls herself ‘Queen Mystic.’”

...

After introducing the “four kings,” Alger changed the topic to the six remaining pirate admirals.

“The owner of the Black Tulip, Ludwell, was once a subordinate of the King of the Five Seas. Later, he became independent and calls himself ‘Admiral Hell.’ Rumor has it that he’s established certain connections with the Numinous Episcopate. He’s a powerful medium and can control all sorts of creatures in the spirit world. He’s terrifying and odd. Rumor has it that he possesses a ring left behind from the ancient era’s ‘Death.’ “Admiral of Stars Cattleya was once a follower of Queen Mystic, but they’ve long become estranged. The reason for that, according to rumors, is because she joined a particular secret organization, angering Queen Mystic. And according to the information I know, this secret organization is the Moses Ascetic Order.”

The Moses Ascetic Order... The Mystery Pryer pathway... The Hidden Sage... Klein suddenly thought of old Neil’s loss of control and the evil god who would whisper temptations into the ears of Low-Sequence Beyonders of the same Sequence.

This was the first time he learned news regarding the Moses Ascetic Order through reality instead of books!

Then, Alger introduced Admiral of Blood Senor, who was suspected to be nonhuman; Vice Admiral Deep Sea Howl Constantine, who possessed a bloodline that was partially from sea monsters; Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina Edwards, and Vice Admiral Dusk Bulatov Ivan.

“Thank you so much for sharing. I’m beginning to yearn for the sea,” Audrey said, filled with longing. “I don’t know when I’ll be able to truly travel.”

“No, Miss Justice, it’s absolutely not as nice as you imagine. From my point of view, it’s an amalgamation of blood, chaos, murder, desire, and horror,” Alger calmly doused her enthusiasm.

Audrey nodded and switched topics.

“There have been 11 serial murders in Backlund recently, but one of them has been proven to be a copycat crime. The serial killings are against women who were street girls but are now working normal professions. The murderer cuts open their stomachs and removes all of their internal organs.”

“This sounds like something to do with devil worship. Was it done by someone from the Blood Sanctify Sect?” Alger instantly made a guess.

“I don’t know. The murderer hasn’t been found yet.” Audrey yearned to become a detective, bringing Susie along and capturing that cursed murderer.

At this moment, Derrick blurted out in a daze, “I know about such rituals.”

He knows? That’s right. Before the cataclysm, especially during the Second Epoch, devils were active in the real world where they lived on the ground. They were the object of hatred for both giants and dragons. It’s normal for the City of Silver to have relevant records... Their history hasn’t been tampered with, nor has there been any blanks over the generations... Klein looked thoughtfully at The Sun, waiting for him to say more.

“You know about this?” Audrey asked in joy.

Derrick nodded.

“It’s mentioned in our Devil Studies. It’s rather ancient. The Devils use it as a ritual to supplement their advancement, typically used when advancing from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5.”

“It’s not a ceremony to please the devil, but a ceremony for the devil to assist them in advancing?” Audrey asked in surprise.

Derrick replied very seriously, “That’s right. The Abyss pathway’s

Sequence 6 is called Devil. This is also the origin of that race’s name.”

The Abyss pathway? Before the cataclysm, the Devil pathway was called the Abyss pathway, and Devil is only the name of Sequence 6... Could... Sequence 0 be Abyss? Again, Klein discovered the value of The Sun.

A lot of knowledge and mysteries were lost across the river of history, but the City of Silver still possessed them!

“Is that so...” Audrey nodded indiscernibly. “Mr. Sun, are you aware of the actual details of the ritual?”

Derrick nodded and said, “The minimum requirement is 13 and the highest is 49. The more complete the ritual, the higher the chance of advancement.

“Between two murders, there must be a minimum of three days. Otherwise, it would be easy to lose control, but the interval will also not exceed nine days. That will cause the ritual to be reset.

“Every time a murder occurs and after every partial ritual, the Devil will eat the victim’s organs. From this point on, he’ll be in a violent and bloodthirsty state, wishing to harm others until that desire is satisfied once again.”

“That’s really scary...” Audrey sighed from the bottom of her heart, feeling that she couldn’t even bear to imagine it.

Klein sat in the thick gray fog, quietly listening and remembering.

After discussing the case of the serial killer, Audrey looked at Alger and organized her words.

“Mr. Hanged Man, there’s something that I’ve been wondering about.

“I’ve attended several Beyonder gatherings and find that very few people sell potion formulas. Even if there is one, it would be very difficult for the transaction to close. Why is this?”

Alger chuckled and said, “That’s because a potion formula is easy to fake, and Beyonder gatherings are relatively hidden and not too binding. Therefore, no one dares to risk their lives. Are you going to prepare two sets of Beyonder ingredients and conduct an experiment with animals first? That price is too high.” “...” Audrey suddenly felt a little guilty.

“Moreover, that’s not the only extra cost. Animals can lose control more easily than humans after taking potions. You have to hire a few Beyonders to protect you to prevent you from dying during your experiments. So, for most Beyonders, even if a formula appears, they wouldn’t dare buy it,” Alger added.

“...” Audrey felt even guiltier.

Alger didn’t notice her reaction and continued, “Because of this, unless the host or a member of the gathering has the ability to appraise the authenticity of the potion formula and has already won the trust of most members, it’s difficult for a formula trade to close.”

Well, the Old Mister Eye of Wisdom can... Mr. A is a Shepherd, so he should be able to... Klein leaned back in his chair and muttered something to himself in silence.

A thought flashed through Audrey’s mind as she asked, “Can’t it be done by making an oath?”

“Honorable Lady, this is an underground gathering. Do you think it’s suitable to make an oath in the name of one of the seven orthodox gods? This isn’t something that can be resolved with an oath. A corresponding ritual is needed.” Alger chuckled. “As for other evil gods or devils and mysterious existences like the Hidden Sage and the True Creator, unless you’re ‘Their’ believers, who would dare to swear an oath in ‘Their’ name? Wouldn’t they be wishing death upon themselves?” At this point, he sighed.

“In addition, without them knowing the acting method, potions easily lead to a loss of control, easily turning people into monsters. Furthermore, the corresponding ingredients are hard to obtain and rather expensive. Therefore, as long as the seven Churches don’t allow such trades to be officially recognized, there’s no need for them to

deliberately control the spread of potion formulas on a wide scale, much less talk about advancement."

"So that's how it is..." Audrey murmured to herself, clearing a huge question in her mind.

No wonder... Klein suddenly came to a realization.

Seven orthodox gods? Derrick really wanted to ask which seven they were, but he ultimately held himself back.

He thought for a moment and said, "The City of Silver has recently organized an expedition to explore deep into the darkness and found a semi-destroyed temple. The statue that's worshipped inside was a naked man nailed upside down on a cross. There were also a lot of bloodstains on its surface.

"Do you know which god that is?"

This is... the True Creator! The Forsaken Land of God actually has a temple of the True Creator! Judging from what The Sun said, the True Creator shouldn't exist before the cataclysm; otherwise, it would be impossible for the City of Silver to not recognize it! Klein used his Clown ability to control his expression to prevent the shock from showing on his face.

Justice, The Hanged Man, and The World exchanged looks, shook their heads, and said in unison, "We don't know."

Just as they finished speaking, they heard Mr. Fool in the gray fog say in a deep voice, "That's the Fallen Creator."

The Fallen Creator? Derrick frowned immediately.

The residents of the City of Silver had always believed in the "omnipotent and omniscient God, the Lord that created everything"; therefore, when he heard a similar name with the word "fallen" tagged to it, he couldn't help but instinctively reject and feel uncomfortable about the notion.

Fallen Creator... That's the way Mr. Fool addresses the True Creator... So that's the image of this evil god... But why would his statue and temple appear within the City of Silver's exploration confines? That place is suspected to be the Forsaken Land of God! Or perhaps, before it was abandoned by the gods, there was already the faith of the True Creator... Could the holy residence that the Aurora Order always talks about be the Forsaken Land of God? Many thoughts came to Alger, but he couldn't make an accurate judgment because the history before the Cataclysm had long evolved into myths and legends. It couldn't simply be described as information shrouded in fog.

He thought for two seconds and deliberately said, "We have another name for the Fallen Creator. It's the True Creator.

"The faction that believes in 'Him' is in control of the Beyonder pathways such as the Secrets Suppliant, Listener, and Shadow Ascetic. The subsequent Sequence includes the Shepherd you mentioned before."

Shepherd? The silent Derrick sat up straight, his eyes filled with horror.

He wasn't unfamiliar with the Beyonder pathways which The Hanged Man had referred to, other than some of the Sequences being described with similar words in the City of Silver. For instance, The Whispered and Listener.

So that strange and evil statue represents the Secrets Suppliant pathway... Elder Lovia is already a Shepherd... She's been acting more and more strangely... Derrick suddenly started to worry about the six-member council's newly advanced elder and the safety of the City of Silver.

In the past, when they explored the surrounding areas, the City of Silver had found a few cities that were completely destroyed. In those places, only a few pieces of rubble had been carved with words that proved the existence of such a civilization.

These words were all variations of Dragonese, Jotun, and Elvish and most of them repetitively described one kind of existence.

That existence was called: “Evil god!”

The residents of the City of Silver who was involved in the expedition were guessing that those cities were destroyed by evil gods. So, after finding out that Elder Lovia’s pathway was probably controlled by an evil god, how could Derrick not be shocked, worried, and terrified?

He returned to his taciturn state, disappointing Audrey who had been waiting to hear more stories about the City of Silver.

After so many gatherings, after her purchase of the dragon race’s intelligence, her interest towards the City of Silver had grown even more.

His reaction is a little different from what I expected... Alger observed calmly for a while, but he failed to gain anything from it.

For a moment, he couldn’t find a point of entry into the conversation. And if he asked directly, he suspected that The Sun would request payment which wasn’t an easy task for him since he was burdened with the debt of two Beyonder ingredients.

It was at this moment that they simultaneously heard the sound of the table being tapped gently.

Klein concealed his fatigue with the thick gray fog and said with a chuckle, “Let’s end today’s gathering here.”

“Your will is our will.” Audrey immediately stood up and curtsied with her illusory skirt. The Hanged Man, The Sun, and The World successively replied with similar words.

Klein waved his hand and severed the connection, quietly watching the blurry shadows of Miss Justice and the others disappear into thin air.

Then, he made his smurf, The World, disappear. Then, he picked up the small badge which he had obtained from Lanevus and studied it.

"You can join if you have this item." Klein read the sentence on the back of the badge but realized that it didn't undergo any changes.

He thought for a moment and carefully injected spirituality into it.

A layer of faint light bloomed and quickly condensed into a light beam, shooting out of the gray fog.

However, it was repelled by the endless gray fog.

The beam of light suddenly dispersed, transforming into a palmsized piece of illusory goatskin parchment. On it was written in ancient Feysac: "4 January 1350, 8 p.m. in Babur Valley."

A simple communication device in the field of mysticism? It sends out messages, requests synchronization, and gets the latest rendezvous time and venue? Klein recalled the scene he had just seen and made a preliminary judgment on the use of the badge.

1350, that's next year... The Babur Valley lies in the area before the Tussock River enters Backlund... The time is precise, but the venue is vague. It's a valley that's almost a hundred kilometers long... Perhaps, this badge can be used as a location tool when one gets there... Klein turned the badge over and over, with interest, trying to figure out the corresponding symbols, incantations, and characteristics, to see if he could copy one himself.

Unfortunately, since he was no longer part of the Nighthawks, his knowledge in mysticism was still at the same level as before. He had no opportunities of improving it further.

Therefore, after studying it for a few minutes, he could only helplessly give up.

As for the phrase "you can join if you have this item," Klein's plan was to not consider it for the time being.

If I can become a Faceless by the end of this year, then I can head there in disguise. Otherwise, forget it... Klein silently said to himself, then he turned his attention to the matter of advancing to Magician.

The true root and juice of the Mist Treant is likely "in the bag" with The Sun... If my luck isn't too bad, I should be able to get the spinal fluid of a Dark Patterned Black Panther this week. Sequence 7, a Mid-Sequence. I can already see and touch it... Hmm... How should a Magician act? As he thought about it, Klein began to consider specific issues.

Due to his experiences before and after his death and resurrection, he instantly comprehended the true essence of Clown. Therefore, in this month or so, he only needed constant acting in his daily life to gradually digest it. He didn't need to make further summaries and adjust it according to the feedback. After killing Lanevus and attaining his initial revenge, the Clown potion was completely digested the moment he was laughing amid tears.

This wasn't the same as the process in which Klein first digested the Seer potion. It was considered a special case, and now he had to return to such a situation with the Magician's acting.

The true essence of Magician, to pass off the illusory with the genuine? Hmm, according to what Zaratul said in the Emperor's diary, although the main focus of this pathway isn't fate, a portion of it still belongs to it. So, there must be something corresponding to it? For example, it might seem that fate can be changed to a certain extent, but in the end, it turns out to all be an illusion. It's just a magic trick that fools you? Klein rubbed his temples, then wrapped his remnant spirituality around himself and descended into the gray fog.

...

St. George's Borough, in a two-bedroom apartment.

"Fortunately, I prepared another place like this. Otherwise, I wouldn't even know where to hide." Fors stared into the mirror and removed her dropping hair.

"That's right..." Xio replied weakly, lying in bed.

"I just read in the newspaper that Lanevus is dead, but this matter involves godhood, so it won't end so soon. We have to hide for a while. Uh, no, it's you who's going to hide, not me. I'm an upright clinical

doctor, the author of a bestseller!" Fors looked at herself in the mirror and began putting on simple make-up.

Xio couldn't provide a rebuttal as she slowly sat up and said, "Thankfully I was sufficiently clever and possess rich experience. When I got someone to make the report, I didn't directly say that it involved the godhood of the True Creator. I only described it as seemingly very dangerous and that the target had experienced huge changes like he was praying to evil gods. If not, I wouldn't even dare to stay in Backlund. To be embroiled in high-level battles sure is troublesome and dangerous. I don't want to take on any more of Miss Audrey's missions again!" "Really?" Fors asked without looking back.

"Uh..." Xio fell silent for a few seconds and said, "Actually, there was no need for us to mention the godhood. Since Miss Audrey was able to discover this on her side, the Church of the Goddess would definitely be capable of doing so... They've most likely killed 'Giant,' right?"

"I can't be sure," Fors replied without mincing her words.

Xio froze, then let out a long, slow sigh.

Fors stopped what she was doing, turned her head to look at her, and said, "This mission was basically completed by you, so I won't be sharing the payment with you. There's a total of 200 pounds, so with the 70 pounds you've saved up, even if you deduct the expenses, you should be close to obtaining the first Beyonder ingredient for the Sheriff potion!"

"But I wouldn't be able to receive the 100 pounds from the police so quickly." Xio pursed her lips.

This wasn't to say that the police wasn't willing to give the bounty money, but that she couldn't take it directly. She had to go through the friend who had helped her deliver the clues—that was the official bounty recipient.

Since she believed that this matter would definitely cause a huge ruckus, she didn't have the guts to find her friend any time soon.

As for whether that friend would usurp the bounty, she was quite confident. The other party had helped too many shady bounty hunters before. It was fine to take a commission, but if he dared to directly usurp all of the bounty money, he would've already died in some unknown dark alley.

"But it will ultimately belong to you." Fors paused for two seconds and seriously asked, "When you've collected enough money, will you contact the masked guy and work for him so that you can purchase the corresponding ingredients from him?"

"No, unless I can't get it anywhere else and that there's no hope." Xio gave her answer.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was still reminiscing over today's gathering when she suddenly saw her personal maid, Annie, coming over with a piece of paper.

"Miss, here's your telegram." Annie smiled and said, "It's from the east coast of Balam."

Alfred's? Audrey happily received it and read it carefully.

"Dear sister, the Rainbow Salamander that you asked for has arrived at Pritz Harbor last night. My orders are to deliver it to your manor in the suburbs."

Arrived last night? Then it'll be delivered to my manor as early as today and by the latest, tomorrow... Audrey tilted her head to the side and looked at Susie, who was fighting with her snacks. With a shallow smile, she said, "Susie, the gift I prepared for you is almost here."

"Woof?" Susie looked at her mistress in confusion.

Ring! Ring!

Klein circled the lawn behind Leppard's house a few times on the bicycle the inventor had just completed.

"It's not bad, it's just as I expected, but there's no need to make a lone-standing bell. The cyclist won't be able to free a hand when they encounter a situation. You can combine the bell to the handle. This will make it simpler and more adequate for situational developments." Klein's right hand clasped the brake tight, slowing the bike down to a stop.

Meanwhile, he placed the bell in his left hand back to its original spot.

Leppard thought for a moment.

"Yes, that's right. I was simply imitating the ringing bells of the carriages and forgot that this is a brand new mode of transportation."

At this point, he looked at Klein, who was getting off the bike with great familiarity, as he placed it on a rack.

"You give me the feeling that you've ridden a similar type of transportation tool before, and you rode it very well... I'm sure all the other bikes on the market are very flawed and very different from my bike."

Sir, do you have time to learn more about bicycle-sharing systems... As a Clown, I should actually be able to ride a unicycle... Klein silently lampooned before smiling.

"This has nothing to do with experience, the key is outstanding balance and exercise."

He quickly changed the subject. "But based on your introduction just now, the production cost is quite high, and it's quite at odds with our product's market segment. You have to come up with a plan as soon as possible to reduce the cost, and you have to understand that nobles, magnates, and other people of the highclasses of society will definitely not choose to ride their own bicycles. It would be disgraceful, and the

same goes for the middle class with an annual income of 300 pounds or higher.

“Our target audience are clerks, postmen, so-called workingclass aristocrats, and people who earn between seventy to three hundred pounds a year.”

“This is just a prototype, yea—a term invented by Emperor Roselle. It’s normal to have a high cost. If the subsequent industrialization is successful, I believe it wouldn’t be a problem to lower it to 6 pounds. If we can find a cheap replacement material for natural rubber, it’ll be even better. That’s the most expensive component,” Leppard had long considered this problem as he replied.

Unfortunately, no crude oil has been found in this world yet... I wonder if it actually exists or not... Can refined coal tar be a replacement in this aspect? I don’t know about this at all, I’m neither a student of this profession nor a Savant... Klein thought for a moment and said, “If the cost can be kept below four pounds, we’ll be rich. As for the cheap material used to replace natural rubber, you can go through Roselle’s manuscript. Maybe he has some ideas.”

“Yea,” Leppard said before he suddenly added, “speaking of which, I just remembered that there will be an Emperor Roselle Memorial Exhibition at the Royal Museum next week! It’s organized by the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. Rumor has it that there will be the original blueprints of Emperor Roselle’s inventions and all kinds of relics.”

The original invention blueprints and all kinds of relics? Klein’s heart skipped a beat and pressed, “When is it exactly? I’m very interested.”

“From next Tuesday to next Friday, every day from nine in the morning to six in the afternoon. Although Emperor Roselle was once the enemy of the kingdom, the allure of his legendary life hasn’t declined because of this.”

“I’ll take some time out of my schedule to visit the exhibition.” Klein fished out his bulging wallet and took out two ten-pound and two five-pound notes. “Here’s the second payment. Use it to study how to cut costs and make the most perfect application at the Patent Office.

If you don't have a lawyer you know, I can introduce one, and the last twenty pounds will be given to you next week to find new investors and complete the industrialization of the product. Of course, I'll also help you get in touch with people who are interested."

He had never thought of monopolizing the profits of a bicycle. First, he lacked the money for mass production, and second, he believed that he lacked the social connections needed for industrialization, promotion, and sales. He could barely do it himself or hire people to do it. It was hard work with no guarantee of success. It was even possible that he might make a loss. In that case, it would be better to bring in new investors with relevant resources and channels and let the professionals handle the professional work.

More importantly, he would then have the opportunity to cash out a certain amount of shares in advance, accumulating the resources and cash that he needed to advance to Faceless. He wanted to avoid running into a situation where he encountered the ingredients but lacked the money to buy them.

Besides, I have no intention to be a bicycle tycoon. My identity is sensitive. I should stay away from things that might draw society's attention towards me before I become a Faceless. I'm acting as a Magician, not a businessman or a factory owner... Klein sighed in his heart.

"I know several lawyers," Leppard muttered and received the second round of investment funds. "Why don't you go to the bank and apply for a loan? When we get the patent, I'm sure that a bank will loan us money, like the Backlund Bank or Varvat Bank."

"We're not just bringing in investors, but resourceful channels, connections, and skills; do you understand?" Klein explained with a smile. He then put on his hat and said, "When you've applied for a patent, send me a letter. You know my address."

...

On the Sonia Sea stood an island with an extinct volcano.

One by one, ships with masts and sails approached the shore, crowding up the reasonably sizable wharf.

The sound of the pirates singing, shouting, laughing, cursing, and cheering filled the air, turning the place into a sea of revelry.

The Hanged Man, Alger Wilson, stepped off the Blue Avenger and climbed a cliff not far away and watched all of this in silence.

With the exception of the Four Kings and the Seven Pirate Admirals, the rest of the pirates only received the news of the event a week ago. Most of them won't be able to arrive in time as this will prevent the navies of the different countries and the powerful Beyonders from the various Churches to launch an assault. Alger watched the pirates carrying out buckets of ale without his attention on them.

He knew that the Loen Kingdom already had a new generation of ironclad warships, but he wasn't worried about meeting one here. This was because only four months had passed, and the advertised invincible fleet still needed more ironclad warships, and different types of ships for support, as well as the time to train military officers, sailors, and gunners. There was no way they could create a combat force without a year's time.

Even as Alger's thoughts drifted away, the pirates on the ships and wharf suddenly cried out in alarm. Some ran deep into the islands, some hurriedly steered their ships away from the wharf, as if they were running from devils and the plague.

In just a few minutes, the bustling scene from before was reduced to a desolate mess and silence.

Alger turned his head to look at the sea and saw a ship painted black with a huge white flag with a skull hanging from its mast.

The skull was pitch black, and its eye sockets burned with a ghostly blue flame.

Black Death... Alger whispered.

He understood why the pirates had scurried off.

Wherever Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy passed, she would leave a wake of people who got sick for no reason!

Black Death approached the shore slowly as a figure wearing a white linen shirt and dark red coat appeared at the ship's bow.

The figure was quite a beautiful lady, and she also exuded a heroic vibe.

Her beautiful black hair was coiled up high, and she had a white scarf wrapped around her head. She wore beige pants and had a tall and slender figure, and it had no lack of elegance.

What attracted the most attention was the woman's long, straight eyebrows and the sharp, bright blue eyes.

As she looked around, her eyes would occasionally lose focus, making her look adrift and exceptionally alluring.

A wandering poet who had mixed himself with the pirates had arrived at the edge of the cliff at some point. He began reciting.

"She will always be a girl.

"She indeed brings ailments. Oh, I'm sick. My mind is full of her."

A number of pirates who left, gathered once again as they looked at Ailment Maiden Tracy, mesmerized.

Alger held back his feelings of contempt as he glanced at the pirates and scoffed inwardly.

Truly a bunch of fellows with no future or will. All they knew was hide moments ago, but now, they've become seduced by her beauty.

Although Ailment Maiden is indeed very beautiful, it's not to the extent that it will cause them to act this way. Oh... A Beyonder power related to allurement?

As his mind was whirling, Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy left Black Death and began walking to the black palace deep within the island.

At that moment, a huge sailboat appeared on the sea. Its flag depicted an eyelash-less eye with ten stars surrounding it.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya... Alger nodded gently and muttered silently.

Since the Black Death and the other ships were already docked at the wharf, the huge ship didn't approach the shore. Instead, it went around to the sheltered cliff and anchored.

Soon after, the gloomy sky suddenly lit up, and bits of stellar radiance sprinkled down, condensing in the air to form a transparent long bridge. It led from the giant sailboat to the palace.

A woman stepped onto the long bridge and began strolling through the air.

She wore a black, classical robe with numerous symbols and magic characteristics inscribed on it. The most obvious one was a mysterious eye with no eyelashes.

Hanging on this woman's waist, there was a celestial globe and a short scepter. She resembled powerful warlocks who were active in the Fourth Epoch according to folklore.

Alger looked up and frowned slightly as he muttered in puzzlement, *That celestial globe looks familiar...*

It's like, it's like... the strange glass bottle I previously obtained, the one I had no idea how to use. It eventually shattered after Mr. Fool pulled me into the Gathering...

...

On the outskirts of Empress Borough, Audrey led her maids and the huge golden retriever, Susie, into her own manor.

"Miss, the delivery from Enmat Harbor is just ahead," the butler in charge of the manor said in a respectful tone.

"Alright." Audrey nodded lightly and said half-jokingly to the large golden retriever beside her, "Susie, this is your present."

As they spoke, they turned a corner and saw the so-called gift.

It was a giant lizard whose skin changed color depending on how the light hit it. It was three meters long, and its height reached Audrey's knees even with it laying on the ground.

They were two colossal creatures, enormous enough to frighten a child!

“Woof?” She turned her head to look at her mistress and saw that her expression was exactly the same as hers. Apparently, she hadn’t expected the gift to be so exaggerated.

Chapter 295: All Ingredients Gathered

Audrey had always had a subconscious understanding that a Rainbow Salamander = the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland = the size of one's palm. To her, it would be something soft with grooves, a Beyonder ingredient which constantly changed in color.

So, what did that have to do with the three-meter-long colossus in front of her?

For a moment she was confused, but when she heard Susie's yelp, she snapped to her senses. She pretended to be satisfied with the result and said to the butler, "This is exactly the animal specimen I need.

"Um... It's just a little bigger than I thought, just a little.

"Take the servants and move them to the warehouse. I'll study it when I'm free."

"Yes, Miss!" Then, the butler immediately instructed the nearby valets who were furtively looking at their mistress.

Audrey looked around and, without another word, led Susie into the manor's study. Using the excuse that she had to focus on writing a return letter to her brother, she made all the maids she had brought stay outside.

After the dissection is done, there will be two sets of Rainbow Salamander pituitary glands... A portion can be used to exchange for a Farsman Rabbit, just enough to concoct a bottle of the Telepathist potion... Audrey gradually recovered from her astonishment and confusion as she began to think about Susie's advancement.

At that moment, she thought of a serious problem.

She had no idea if Susie had digested the potion or not!

If it hasn't been completely digested, consuming the Telepathist potion would easily lead to a loss of control... She isn't like a human who can endure through it. Wait, how did she endure it the first time!? Besides, her current intelligence is about that of a ten-year-old child's. S-she's already learning words in the Loen language, and she said she wishes to read newspapers and magazines, as well as books... Audrey fell

silent for a few seconds. She glanced at the confused, large golden retriever that sat beside her.

“Susie, have you completely digested the potion?”

“Digest?” Susie returned with clear articulation, expressing her puzzlement.

Audrey had already told her that what she had taken was a potion, and she had warned her not to tell anyone, and not to tell any intelligent animals that could bark or meow.

Audrey nodded her head slowly and heavily.

“It’s a very strange and unique feeling. It feels like something illusory inside your body breaks down and fuses with your mind. You will vaguely see illusory stars one after another, and you will be one of them. These stars will attract each other, in a bid to fuse as one.”

Susie quietly listened to everything, then replied with a light and brisk voice, “Then I should have completely digested it. I’ve had a similar feeling before.”

Ah? Susie has completely digested the Spectator potion? B-but no one taught her the acting method! At most, I would occasionally remind her to observe more and remain calm... Audrey asked in astonishment, “When did you digest it?”

“Last month, the month before last, or perhaps even earlier...” Susie tried her best to recall when. Seeing that her mistress’s expression was getting odder and odder, she hurriedly wagged her tail and timidly added, “I don’t remember... I’m just a dog. I won’t purposely remember such things. Woof.”

Just a dog... But you were only a little slower at digesting than me... Don’t tell me that when I interact with other Beyonders, I’ll say that when it comes to digesting potions, I’m a little better than a dog... Pui! Audrey, what are you thinking! Audrey maintained her elegant smile and politely praised, “Very good, I mean, on this matter regarding the digestion of the potion, you did very well.”

...

Returning from Leppard's place, Klein took a leisurely afternoon nap.

But it wasn't long before he was awakened by illusory, disconcerting cries.

Male? Is it Mr. Hanged Man or Little Sun? Is one of the final main ingredients for my potion ready? Klein carefully tried distinguishing who for a few seconds and soon, forgot about his anger from being awakened. He quickly got up, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

He noticed that the crimson star that symbolized The Hanged Man was contracting and expanding. Hence, he stretched out his hand, spreading his spirituality before touching it.

After the usual honorary names of The Fool, The Hanged Man prayed, "...I've already gathered the Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid and the Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals. Please permit me to hold a sacrificial ritual and seek your help in handing it to Mr. World."

That's pretty fast... The Hanged Man had said that there would be a grand event among the pirates soon. It seems like it's not soon, but now... He always holds back when speaking, never fully speaking the truth... Klein nodded indiscernibly and said, "Sure."

After a simple sacrificial ritual, Alger resisted his urge to ask Mr. Fool if the celestial globe on Admiral of Stars Cattleya had anything to do with "Him."

At this moment, Klein had already forgotten about him and was admiring the two Beyonder ingredients on the surface of the long bronze table.

The Dark Patterned Black Panther Spinal Fluid was a seemingly translucent liquid, but if one looked carefully, they would discover that its clarity was also divided into different levels. The lower one went, the more transparent they were at distinct levels. It fully satisfied someone with an obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The Spring of the Elves Marrow Crystals was similar to a faded egg. Its shell was very thin, and it looked like it could easily shatter at a

touch. Even without shaking, one could still hear the sound of swishing water inside.

I should be able to get 300 pounds and a formula clue... My Magician is only short of the true root and juice of the Mist Treant. I wonder when Little Sun will complete the mission... Klein waited in anticipation.

As for the other supplementary ingredients, he had already bought them at various stores. For example, the Droplet Gem he needed to buy was purchased from a jewelry store and he had ground it into powder. 5 grams was about 2.5 pounds.

The Sun, Derrick, didn't keep Klein waiting long, and on Wednesday evening, he whispered a prayer to The Fool that he had prepared the true root and juice of the Mist Treant and asked him to pass them on to The World.

The Mist Treant's true root was heart-shaped, brown, palmsized, and wrinkled. It looked like an old man's skin, but its back was as smooth and exquisite as a gem. It was slightly expanding and contracting, as though it had a certain amount of vitality.

Its juice was light green and sparkling, making it look very delicious.

Klein just looked at them, feeling a little smug.

In the present day and age, Sequence 7 was the threshold of a Mid-Sequence Beyonder.

This meant that a Beyonder would finally be able to bid farewell to the state of being only slightly stronger than ordinary people in certain aspects. They would be able to wield a relative abundance of Beyonder powers!

Phew... Klein slowly exhaled, returned to his bedroom, and summoned himself to bring the Beyonder ingredients into the real world.

He didn't prepare any additional vessels. He washed an iron pot in the kitchen a few times and began to concoct the potion according to the steps of handling the supplementary ingredients before handling the main ingredients.

With the Clown's ability at controlling his body, he quickly finished the first stage, and one by one, he put in the Dark Patterned Black Panther's spinal fluid and the Mist Treant's true root.

Sizzle!

With a jarring sound, a pale white fog suddenly rose and was forcefully pulled back into the pot by an invisible force.

When everything calmed down, Klein quickly poured every drop of liquid into a transparent bottle that he had prepared.

That liquid was rather special. It was as if fireworks were constantly being released from within it. Red, orange, yellow, green, and other colors constantly scattered, disappeared, and then reappeared again.

This was the Magician potion!

Klein stuck a coin worth 1 pound between his thumb and index finger of his left hand, flicked it up, and opened his palm to catch it.

He was using divination to confirm if the potion he concocted had succeeded!

Pa!

The gold coin fell, its portrait faced up, indicating a positive response!

Without any hesitation, Klein put away the gold coin, picked up the potion, and walked out of the kitchen.

At that moment, the sky was already dark. The gas lamps in the room hadn't been lit up yet, causing the surroundings to be in complete darkness. Only the light near the oriel window created a gloomy scene.

Klein sat down on the sofa and began Cogitation to calm his stirring heart and dispel all of his emotions temporarily from his body.

After doing all of this, he raised the glass bottle, tipped his head, and drank the Magician potion.

Gulp! Gulp!

The ice-cold potion went down his throat, and at every moment, it felt like countless bubbles were bursting.

Klein's entire body was experiencing this stimulation, and massive amounts of information flooded his mind, blooming into fireworks.

The veins on his forehead bulged, and his head felt like it was about to burst!

However, this wasn't a very difficult situation for Klein to endure. The terrifying ravings before entering the gray fog and the evil roars of the True Creator were much more terrifying.

"Hornacis... Flegrea... Hornacis... Flegrea... Hornacis... Flegrea..."

The ethereal temptation echoed again. Klein's head expanded and contracted repeatedly before he gradually recovered his thoughts. He began to consciously restrain his thoughts, outline the spherical light, and slowly enter a state of Cogitation.

After an unknown period of time, his vision recovered. At the same time, he felt an itch all over his body, with his arms feeling the worst.

Klein rolled up his sleeves and was surprised to see that one of his arms was deeply wrinkled, like a centenarian. The other arm had lost its color and had become translucent. He could directly see his blood vessels, muscles, and veins.

This... Could it be that I had nearly lost control? No, it shouldn't be. This should be the remnant influences... Klein sat on the sofa in the dark, leaning forward as he watched the anomaly in his arms warily, as if it were a breeding ground for monsters.

And all of this had nothing to do with Klein. He sat quietly on the sofa in the darkness, watching his creased skin and the translucent state of his arms slowly recover. Five to six minutes later, Klein silently sighed as everything finally returned to normal.

It's a good thing that no one came knocking on the door or ringing on the bell... I only chose to advance after completely digesting the Sequence 8 potion. With such severe effects, it would be hard for those Beyonders who depended on time to grind through the potion. It really is difficult to pass this stage.

No wonder Captain took nine years...

No wonder Swain, the former Captain of a Mandated Punisher Squad and owner of the Evil Dragon Bar, didn't dare to consume the Sequence 7 potion, Seafarer...

After sitting silently for more than ten seconds, Klein slowly stood up.

At that moment, he was already a Mid-Sequence Beyonder.

At that moment, he was already a Magician.

He took two steps forward and passed the coffee table. Klein stretched his body and shook his wrist, but he found nothing unusual.

He looked at the gas lamps outside the oriel window which illuminated the darkness and gloominess and said to himself thoughtfully, *My hands are more agile and I'm more nimble. Even if I don't have Beyonder powers, as long as I work hard enough, I can become a top magician.*

This was his first impression of his own transformation.

And just like what was recorded in the Nighthawk records, if a potion provided a specific magical power, then the Beyonder would become aware of it after ingesting it. They would grasp the specific details as though the corresponding knowledge would be injected and imprinted into the mind through a mysterious method.

Just now, my head nearly exploded... Klein smiled and shook his head, carefully recalling what he had felt and the corresponding magical spells.

It had to be said that Magician was indeed considered a powerful Sequence 7 with it possessing many miraculous abilities that could all be cast very quickly.

Among them, there were three which Klein valued and liked the most.

The most important one was, Damage Transfer!

As long as he didn't die instantly, as long as his hands could still move, he could transfer the vital wounds to unimportant areas like his arms, turning fatal wounds into minor injuries. This was a very useful Beyonder ability for life-preservation in actual combat.

The only problem is that at Sequence 7, wounds can only be transferred around my body, and there's only one opportunity. Perhaps as my Sequence is raised, the wounds can be transferred to other items or people... It really does feel like magic... Klein imagined the future.

The second spell was Flaming Jump. Within a range of 30 meters, he could phase between a fire spark that he had left behind and any flame

that existed. It was similar to teleportation which seemed to gain its uniqueness with help from the spirit world.

Well, it can be used to its fullest when performing magic... Klein mocked himself inwardly with great satisfaction.

More importantly, as he digested the potion and raised his Sequence, the range of Flaming Jump would increase significantly.

The third type of Beyonder spell was the Air Bullets which Klein had seen the suited Clown from the Secret Order use.

The Magician could produce air projectiles with power and speed comparable to that of the bullets fired from a custom revolver just by snapping his fingers or mimicking sounds. Furthermore, the effect would improve along with the digestion of the potion and the raising of his Sequence. Klein suspected that at Sequence 4 or 5. he could create his own cannonball.

This way, I don't need to buy more revolvers and bullets anymore — No, I still need to buy one. There are many matters that don't need me to expose my Beyonder powers. Any problem that can be solved with guns isn't a problem. Klein nodded indiscernibly and began to examine the other spells and spell-like abilities.

The fourth type was Paper Figurine Substitutes. At a critical moment, the magician could temporarily change the paper figurine into him while he swapped places. It was a relatively simple substitute spell that could not only block a fatal blow but also weaken the damage from hexes.

So this is the use of all the paper figurines that Marionettist Rosago had brought with him... He must feel regret because he was contaminated by the True Creator and didn't have the chance to use a substitute at all... The biggest problem with this spell is the need to prepare the materials beforehand, which means that the paper figurines have to be cut in advance. In the early days of the Fifth Epoch, Beyonders who brought similar items would undoubtedly be regarded as a dark warlock. If it's discovered now, I'll most likely be suspected... Klein mulled over the uses and limitations of Paper Figurine Substitutes.

The fifth kind of spell-like ability was called Flame Controlling. As the name implied, one could manipulate flames within a range of 30 meters with a simple action. It could also be used to ignite certain items within this range. Once the potion has been completely digested, or when I advance in Sequence, one could summon a swirling flame out of thin air.

The sixth was Illusion Creation. By influencing the surrounding environment, one could create illusions with colors, sounds, and smells that were close to reality, allowing one to pass off the fake as the truth and deceive the enemy.

This is a specialty of a Magician... Klein chuckled and walked over to the oriel window as he took in the night scene of the streets with great satisfaction.

The seventh was a fake form of Underwater Breathing. The principle behind it was to create a thin, invisible air pipe which would allow the Magician to breathe freely and seemingly turn into so-called murlocs.

The problem was that the air pipe had a limited length. At his present stage, Klein could only maintain it at around five meters, which meant that if the water depth exceeded five meters, he could drown.

Of course, the potion's digestion and Sequence advancement would result in the growth of the air pipe.

The eighth was a spell-like ability, Bone Softening. This helped a Magician break free from handcuffs, ropes, and chests.

It's also a specialty! Klein thought in a good mood.

The ninth was the evolution of the Clown's ability to turn paper into throwing knives, called Drawing Paper As Weapons. Not only could it turn paper into sharp objects, but it could also temporarily turn into weapons such as bats or bricks, etc.

These were the nine main spells or spell-like abilities of a Magician. Although they weren't particularly strong in both the offensive and defensive aspect, nor were they particularly bizarre, they stood out for their variety. They allowed Klein's strength to instantly rise by more

than one level, and his lifepreservation and means of escape became even better.

Moreover, Magicians had the ability to cast spells at high speeds. This was a sequence of Beyonders who didn't need to chant or inject spirituality. With just a simple action, they could cast a corresponding spell or spell-like ability.

In addition, the potion made Klein attain some tiny tricks, but they weren't very practical.

I can barely be considered quite a good Beyonder... Klein sighed silently.

Just as he was about to go out for a stroll and get another revolver and replenish his bullets at the Bravehearts Bar, the gas lamps outside the oriel window which tainted the crimson moon's moonlight suddenly turned darker and deeper!

Klein looked up in surprise and saw that the dark clouds and mist had dispersed, clearly revealing the red moon which was a little more than a semicircle.

Its outline rapidly turned into a full circle, and in just a few seconds, it had turned into a full moon that was as red as blood!

It had only been two weeks since the last full moon!

According to the normal calendar, according to astronomy, there were still about ten days left until the next full moon!

This is the Blood Moon? Klein's lips moved slightly as he muttered to himself in relief.

In this world, the changes to the room were both regular and irregular.

Ordinarily, it was exactly the same experience Klein had in his previous life; however, there were always a few times every year when it would suddenly become round and dark red, just like blood. Such a situation that had no logic to it. At times, it happened only once a year, and sometimes, four or five times a year.

Neither astronomers nor mystics could explain this phenomenon or come up with a pattern. Therefore, they could only ignore it for the

time being as one of the puzzles. They joked that perhaps the Goddess was in a bad mood and that a change in a woman's mood was undoubtedly irregular.

Of course, not knowing the reason and not being able to understand the essence of the phenomenon didn't mean that there was no corresponding conclusion. In mysticism, people called this situation the Blood Moon, believing that it would bring about the rise and eruption of negative emotions, and that it would strengthen the power of the Underworld and the spirit world. Even if the dead were summoned, they might still be able to climb out of their graves.

"This is the second time this year, right?" Klein stood by the oriel window, admiring the clear sky, and the disk-like full moon which was red and glistening. He felt he was in a relatively good shape.

...

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors Wall, who had participated in a gathering that night, was unable to make it back home to the two-bedroom apartment in St. George Borough. She sat cross-legged on a sofa in the living room, chewing on a new type of bread which had meat and vegetables in it. She had let down her hair as she thought over the plot of her next novel.

Suddenly, she frowned and threw away the food and pen in her hand.

The moonlight outside the window grew stronger and redder, and the look on Fors's face became more and more painful.

Every full moon, she would hear those ravings that would drive her mad!

Bam!

She fell off the couch, her body writhing as she struggled.

After a while, she pulled out a clump of her hair, but the pain did nothing to ease the explosive sensation in her head or to calm the urge to end her life with a knife.

"Here it comes again..." Fors muttered in pain as her legs were stretched taut from the spasms of pain.

She chanted the name of the god she believed in with great difficulty, seeking redemption.

“Great God of Steam and Machinery...

“You are essential, the Embodiment of...

“You are an artisan, a protector...

“You are the glory of technology, glory...”

As she repeatedly chanted, Fors’s suffering didn’t abate, and instead it grew more intense.

Bam!

She tumbled around violently, toppling the coffee table and sweeping the books on it to the ground.

Unable to endure it any further, Fors frantically used her nails to scratch the wooden leg of the coffee table, creating one deep scratch after another along with jarring screeching sounds.

Pa!

Her fingernails broke!

Her hair was growing abnormally long!

At that moment, she felt that she would lose control that very night and become a monster. She had already chanted the honorific names of several gods, but she had failed to receive any reprieve.

“I’m going to die... I’m going to die...” As she writhed and rolled about, she suddenly saw a piece of paper with the words in ancient Hermes written on it.

It was the mysterious incantation Xio had found in the “History of the Loen Kingdom’s Aristocracy!”

Her chanting of it had even attracted an existence suspected to be an evil spirit!

Even if it’s an evil spirit... As long as you can help me... I’m willing to accept... Such a thought flashed through Fors’s turbid mind.

She struggled to look over as she used all her strength to whisper, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era...

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog...

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck...

“Save me, save me...”

Chapter 297: The Full Moon's Ravings

Klein had just put on his double-breasted frock coat, picked up his half top hat, and was walking toward the door when he heard a series of illusory prayers.

Who is it? He frowned slightly and listened, but he could only confirm that the supplicant was a woman and that her voice was staccato, as though she were in great pain.

Since he had nothing particularly urgent to tend to, the newlyadvanced Magician, Klein, casually tossed his half top hat onto the coat rack accurately, and he returned to his bedroom. After taking four steps counterclockwise, he entered the majestic palace.

This time, he didn't see any illusory star expanding or contracting with a deep red glow. Instead, at the end of the ancient, mottled bronze table, by the side of The Fool's seat was a clear radiance rippling out.

It's a prayer from a non-Tarot Club member... Is it Xio or that lady with curly brown hair? Klein speculated as he took his seat.

Since he had already emptied his anonymous account, he didn't suspect that someone was trying to steal his wealth.

Leaning back, Klein pointed with his left hand, spreading out his spirituality to touch the rippling light.

The scene around him suddenly changed. He saw the overturned coffee table, the slanted sofa, books and papers strewn all over the floor, and a woman with brown hair struggling in pain.

At the same time, Klein heard her prayers.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era...

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog...

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck...

"Save me, save me..."

Save me? From the looks of it, she seems to be losing control. Her hair is growing longer at a discernible speed, and her skin is covered with a layer of sinister white light. How could I possibly save her... Klein

observed carefully for a few seconds, then mumbled to himself, feeling stumped.

It was at this moment that he detected in the woman's anguished pleas a faint, illusory, indistinct raving.

Yes, a raving!

These ravings were similar to the ones he experienced before rising above the gray fog, but it had no madness or evil to it at all. Furthermore, it didn't contain any obvious malice.

It appears that this lady's state of nearly losing control is a result of hearing the ravings... If she stops hearing it, could she be able to calm down and turn for the better? In thought, Klein reached his hand out to the rippling circle of light.

Following that, he allowed his spirituality to gush out of his body, establishing a firm and mysterious connection

After advancing to Magician, his spirituality had become a lot more abundant, and the burden in this aspect had decreased accordingly.

...

Fors felt her head muddling as she felt her thoughts were like boiling water. They were constantly bubbling in a bid to break free of the restraints of her head.

"Am I dying... I don't want to, I don't want to become a monster..." Just as she was woefully thinking this in her mind, the pain flooded over her like a tidal wave.

Suddenly, she was wide awake. The pain, the irritation, the madness, and the despair, which she felt so deeply in her bones, seemed to no longer exist, as though it was only an illusion.

I managed to endure through it so quickly today? Isn't it longer during a Blood Moon? Confused, Fors opened her eyes which she had unconsciously closed. She found an endless grayish-white fog beneath her, and in front of her was an ancient, mottled bronze table.

Where is this place? Surprised, she looked around and saw numerous towering stone pillars, as well as a towering palace that was propped up by those stone pillars.

Then, at the very end of the long bronze table, she saw a mysterious figure shrouded in thick gray fog who seemed to be overlooking everything from above.

What is this place? Who is he? Fors turned wary and questioned inwardly.

Then, she remembered what she had just done!

Under her extreme pain, she had chanted the mysterious incantation which Xio had found in the "History of the Loen Kingdom's Aristocracy," an incantation that was suspected to be directed at some evil god!

No, not just evil spirits! He was actually able to temporarily help me get rid of the harmful effects of those terrifying ravings... He even pulled me into this strange world... This... While Fors suppressed the fear in her heart, she half stood up and bowed.

"May I know who you are..."

At that moment, she suddenly recalled the contents of the incantation as she blurted out, "You are The Fool! Uh, Mr. Fool. "You are His Excellency, The Fool?"

Klein smiled, nodded slightly and said, "Just call me Mr. Fool."

As he spoke, he noticed on the back of the chair in which Fors was sitting on, the symbols and mysterious patterns formed by the shining stars were rapidly changing.

In just one or two seconds, the interior of the room was covered with layers upon layers of doors. Numerous illusory doors of the same kind were formed there!

Door? As soon as Klein saw the symbol, he immediately associated it with the mention of Mr. Door in Roselle's diary.

During a full moon, the other party would come close to the real world and let out cries for help!

Could the ravings have something to do with Mr. Door? Hmm... It's the night of the Blood Moon tonight, an enhanced version of the full moon... This lady corresponds to a door, and the symbol on the back of Miss Xio's seat is similar to the Sword of Judgment... Klein nodded indiscernibly.

Through this, he confirmed that once a stable connection was established and that if the other party was a Beyonder, the symbol behind the seat would change according to the other party's actual circumstances. They didn't have to necessarily join the Tarot Club and come to the mysterious space above the gray fog at fixed intervals.

At that moment, waves of shock rose up in Fors's heart.

The Fool... It's indeed The Fool... That honorific name does point towards a powerful existence!

What does he want? Will he want to make a transaction with my soul?

Heh, at least—it's at least better than losing control from those ravings... I guess I managed to claw my life back. Whatever happens in the future would just be a bonus...

While she was still lost in her thoughts, she suddenly heard Mr. Fool ask with a smile, "You hear ravings from nowhere every full moon?"

How does he know? Fors looked over in surprise and replied in a daze, "Yes."

Before she finished her sentence, she suddenly thought of a possibility and asked, "D-do you know the origin of those ravings? Do you know who is trying to harm me? Do you know how to solve this problem once and for all?"

He's a miserable wretch who is lost in the darkness and trapped in a storm... Klein had intended to reply with the words that would shape his image, but when he thought about it, he couldn't be sure that the woman in front of him had indeed heard the words coming from Mr. Door.

In order to not make any mistakes and to not embarrass himself in the future, he skipped over the question and said with a vague smile, "He

might not necessarily want to hurt you. Perhaps, he is just asking for your help."

Therefore, the ravings weren't malicious, not crazy or evil.

"Asking for my help? But those ravings push me closer and closer to losing control. If you hadn't helped me, I might've become a monster by now," Fors returned incredulously. Klein grinned and said, "That's because you're too weak."

"I'm too weak?" Fors was stunned and at a loss.

Klein briefly explained, "The difference in your life's natural order and his is too great. Perhaps, just by breathing normally, the storm brought about by him can rip you to pieces. Perhaps, just a glance from him will cause you to die on the spot.

"Of course, if he purposely controls his own strength, it's not that he can't communicate normally with you. However, his voice might need to pass through layers of obstructions in order to reach your ears. Deliberate control typically implies a failure to call for help. Heh heh, that's if we assume that he's calling for help."

The difference in our life's natural order is too great... I would die from just one glance from him... Fors was stunned from what she heard. After quite some time, she forced a smile and said, "This reminds me of a saying.

"Do not look directly at God..."

Klein smiled at her without giving a positive answer.

Could it be that those terrifying ravings really come from an existence who's nearly a god? Mr. Fool can help me eliminate that person's influence, and all this time, he's been talking about it in a rather bland tone... Does this mean that he and that existence's life's natural order are at the same level? The more she thought about it, the more shocked she became. Even her body couldn't stop trembling.

Klein waited a few seconds, then asked, "How long does it last every full moon?"

“Three to five minutes. If it’s the night of the Blood Moon, it will exceed seven minutes,” Fors gathered her thoughts and answered honestly.

The more Klein listened, the more he felt that the ravings’ owner belonged to Mr. Door.

He temporarily put the matter down and smiled.

“You can return in a few minutes.

“There is only one way to solve your problem, and that is to raise your life’s natural order.”

Fors hesitated for a moment before saying, “Whenever I encounter the full moon, can I recite your name?

“I-I will be your devout believer!”

“No, there’s no need.” Klein smiled and shook his head. “But I don’t mind helping you along the way.”

“Thank you so much!” Although she suspected that she was dealing with an evil god, she no longer wanted to experience the same painful “nightmare” as before.

After confirming this matter, she relaxed a lot. Noticing that there were still many seats around the long bronze table, she asked probingly, “Mr. Fool, it seems there are others who come here frequently?”

No, they might not necessarily be human... Fors added silently.

Klein smiled and said with a casual attitude, “They’re a few people who are similar to you. I pulled them here for various reasons.

“They hope that I can hold a gathering at regular intervals to facilitate the trade of formulas, ingredients, information, and missions.

“I agreed to it.”

Fors was enticed by what she heard. Thinking that she was already part of this, she boldly asked, “Mr. Fool, can I join this gathering?”

“Sure. Three in the afternoon on Mondays. Remove all disturbances.” Klein smiled and pointed at the cards that suddenly appeared on the

surface of the long bronze table. “They’ve decided to use the names of the tarot cards as their code names. You can pick one of these, but these already belong to someone and you cannot choose from...”

Fors nodded her head, shuffling the cards and cutting them with great interest while mumbling, “Let fate arrange my title...”

Soon, she pulled out a card and looked at it: “The Magician!”

Chapter 298: Another Case

Fors's eyelashes fluttered a few times before she slowly opened her eyes, only to find herself lying on the floor of her living room. Through the window, she saw that the bright moon was hanging high in the sky like a crimson disk. The normally thin and blurry chiffon seemed to turn into rich bloody light.

I'm not dead, I didn't lose control... It wasn't a dream just now... I really was saved by a mysterious and powerful Mr. Fool... When Fors sat up and examined herself, she saw that there was nothing unusual about the rest of her body except that her hair had grown longer and denser.

But my life is completely different from before... I don't know if this is good or bad... Silently mumbling to herself, Fors sat on the ground hugging her knees whilst lost in thought. Her mind would sometimes wander off, and at times, she would be anxious, sad, or confused.

...

Above the gray fog, Klein looked at the chair which had the symbol of a layered door on its back. He muttered to himself in thought, *I wonder what kind of information is contained in those ravings...*

When she's at Sequence 7 or Sequence 6, she should be able to resist the negative effects and hear the content of the ravings.

If she hasn't grasped the acting method, I can let Miss Justice and the others help me teach her. I have sworn under a Holy Artifact to the Goddess that I wouldn't mention anything related to the acting method to people who aren't aware of it.

...When I advance to Sequence 5 and become a Marionettist, perhaps I can use a corresponding ritual and the uniqueness of this mysterious space to remotely control her and directly see what she sees and hear what she hears.

That way, I can determine if it's Mr. Door...

This gentleman who has witnessed the history of the Fourth Epoch might be even older than Mr. Azik who had lived multiple lives.

I wonder what Sequence his strength and level are equivalent to. 2? Or even 1?

After some consideration, he felt that his spirituality was becoming unstable, so he hurriedly descended into the gray fog and returned to the real world.

This was a common occurrence after a recent advancement; therefore, Klein gave up on going out, and he patiently entered Cogitation at home, retracting and releasing his spirituality.

...

In the wee hours of the morning, Fors took the earliest steam metro back to St. George Borough before taking a public carriage to the two-bedroom apartment where she lived with Xio.

When she opened the door, she was surprised to find Xio, who usually slept late, toasting some bread.

“The sudden appearance of last night’s Blood Moon gave me insomnia, so I woke up very early. Fors, are you alright? Did those strange ravings get stronger?” Xio asked, looking up with concern.

Fors’s vision suddenly blurred. She turned her head to the side, forced a smile, and said with her usual confrontational tone, “What happened to your brain? Didn’t I say it before? The ravings will definitely become stronger during the Blood Moon!

“But it doesn’t affect me at all. Yeah, it doesn’t affect me at all. Look at me, look at how energetic I am right now!

“Hey, toast a piece of bread for me too!”

“I thought you didn’t like eating it this way?” Xio tidied her short, blonde hair and mumbled softly.

...

After taking his first step at revenge and attaining an advancement, Klein slept through the night. He leisurely went out to buy Feynapotter noodles for breakfast, along with a Desi pie and a cup of sweet iced tea.

After enjoying the delicacies in satisfaction, he put down his fork and knife and picked up the newspaper. He was in a very relaxed mood as he began to read.

A quick scan revealed that the headlines of the Tussock Times read:

"Night of the Blood Moon, the Killer Demon strikes again!"

Again? Klein quickly flipped through the front pages of the other newspapers and saw many similar titles:

"The 11th true case! The police are helpless!"

"The cold-blooded Killing Demon has once again made a clear mockery of the police!"

"The atmosphere of panic is spreading through Backlund!"

This... The Nighthawks and the Mandated Punishers must all be having headaches, right? Klein sighed in his heart.

To be honest, he had the urge to catch the killer.

Back on Earth, when he was weak, he would often daydream about being a person to uphold justice and punish evil. But now, as a Sequence 7 Beyonder, Klein felt sorry for his past dreams due to his choice of not being a superhero.

Sigh, what a pity. This case has already received a high level of attention. If I were to join in, wouldn't that mean that I'm waiting for my identity to be exposed? I still have to be rational... Furthermore, according to The Sun, the culprit is highly likely to be advancing from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5. Although I won't be afraid of him, I might not be able to catch him even with the new spells and spell-like abilities I gained. It's quite risky... After thinking about it, Klein still chose to follow his deepest beliefs and remain an ordinary citizen.

He believed that with the strength of the few Churches—if the killer were to continue committing crimes—there was a high chance of them getting caught!

After flipping through the news, Klein glanced at the Backlund Morning Post and found that the advertisement for the Ernst Firm's purchase of goods had appeared again on the fifth page.

There's going to be a gathering tomorrow night at 8 o'clock. I can sell the Spring of the Elves marrow crystals to the Apothecary then... Klein muttered as he memorized the first four digits of the price listed.

Half an hour later, he finished reading the thick newspaper in front of him and started to seriously consider his future plans.

The long-term plan is to advance to a higher Sequence, becoming a demigod expert before I plot my revenge against Ince Zangwill.

A mid-term plan is to find the acting method for Magician. I'll slowly summarize the corresponding principles to observe, so as to digest the potion bit by bit. During this process, I'll start my search for the Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow, hair from a Deep-sea Naga and Thousand-faced Hunter's blood and mutated pituitary gland, as well as the means to remove an evil god's corruption from an object.

Um... The Beyonder ingredients of Sequence 6 each cost around 1500 pounds. It's very expensive!

In addition, I need to obtain a mystical item that's focused on attacking or controlling. Although a Magician is very powerful, most of the Beyonder powers are used for life-preservation and escaping. In a corresponding environment, the strongest attack is that of a custom revolver. The only boon is how it takes others by surprise, and it also lacks the means to control an enemy.

Short-term plan, short-term plan... Heh, I'll be cutting up some paper figurines and make preparations for my powers. I'll visit the circus in the afternoon as a way to relax and for entertainment. I can try to gain inspiration for the "acting" by observing ordinary magicians. Yes, I saw in the newspapers that there are a few permanent circuses in Backlund...

After finalizing his thoughts, Klein immediately tidied up his plates, cleaned his knife and fork, and devoted himself into being busy making preparations.

When it was almost noon, he put down the scissors and looked at the three crude paper figurines in front of him. He sighed and muttered to

himself, *This is probably the first time in my life that I've done handicraft so seriously*

Fortunately, it's just to cut out some paper figurines and not flowers or embroidery. It's fine as long as it's shaped like a person!

Sigh, if it wasn't for the fact that my hands have become dexterous, I might've failed today...

Klein had just used an additional paper figurine to test his capabilities and confirmed that everything was fine.

He folded the paper figurines and hid it in a stack of notes. Klein put them away into his pocket.

Just as he was about to go out and enjoy a meal at a slightly better restaurant before heading to the nearest circus to watch the performance, the doorbell suddenly rang, and the pleasant, jingling sound echoed in the air.

A job? The advertisement I posted should be almost done with its listing period... Wearing a starched shirt and a thin warm sweater, Klein came to the door and grabbed the handle.

At the same time, the image of the visitor appeared in his mind.

It was a man in his forties. He was rather fat, and he appeared to have difficulty even standing.

His eyes were tiny from the copious amounts of flesh on his face. His skin was rough but very white. He had a gentleman's cane in his hand, and a very tall and large hat on his head.

Even though Backlund was cold in October, the man's forehead was dripping with sweat.

Beside him were two attendants in bright red coats, supporting him from both sides.

I don't know him... Klein mumbled, and before his spiritual perception could respond, he opened the door.

“Good afternoon. The weather is truly scorching hot.” The fat middle-aged man took out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

As he spoke, a cold wind blew, causing the two attendants beside him to shiver.

“Good afternoon. Is there anything I can help you with?” Klein asked politely.

“You are Detective Sherlock Moriarty? I have something that I want to entrust you with.” The middle-aged man forced a smile and said, “I forgot to introduce myself. I’m Rogo Colloman, a jewelry businessman.”

“Please, come on in.” Klein smiled and made way.

Rogo Colloman stepped in with heavy footsteps and sat down on the sofa, causing the old furniture to emit a resistant groan.

“What is it exactly?” Klein took out a copper penny and deftly rolled it around his fingertips.

Rogo sighed and said, “I wish for you to protect my son until tomorrow afternoon. He has offended some lunatics.”

“Until tomorrow afternoon? Have you found a solution? Why not call the police?” Klein asked unhurriedly.

Rogo remained silent for two seconds before saying, “Adol got into some bad company and was led to do bad things by them. Oh, it’s nothing too serious, but ones that can land him in prison. Unless it’s necessary, I don’t want to call the police.

“He recently had a falling out with those bad friends of his. As a result, he suddenly broke down and kept yelling that those people wanted to kill him.

“I was very worried, so I hired six senior bodyguards from a security company to keep watch outside. Then, I hired another four private detectives to take shifts watching over Adol, even if he’s sleeping.

“But one of the detectives suddenly had an accident at home and will only be able to return tomorrow afternoon. Therefore, I can only hire another detective at the last minute.

“I’m sorry, I can only hire you for one day.

“Yes... The reward is 10 pounds, and if you were to encounter danger, I’d add more. You’ll definitely be satisfied.”

Is that so... 10 pounds for a day. That’s equivalent to a week’s salary of Mr. Sammer from next door... Klein was able to tell from the color of the other’s emotions that he wasn’t lying.

During the brief silence in the living room, he kept flipping the copper penny between his fingers and with a thud, it fell into his palm.

Klein glanced at it, bent his fingers and smiled.

“Deal.”

Chapter 299: Snapping Fingers

West Borough, Grimm Garden Street

Klein, with a quite a stubble around his mouth, wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses while carrying a top hat and a black cane. He followed Rogo Colloman into a spacious and bright living room.

There was a huge crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The walls, corners, and tables were decorated with all kinds of golden carvings and ornaments. The entire area looked gorgeous, exquisite, and luxurious.

As expected of a jewelry businessman, a businessman staying in West Borough... Klein scanned the oil paintings by the side and sighed.

With every step Rogo took, the fat on his body quivered. It left people maliciously wondering when his clothes and pants would snap.

However, as a jewelry businessman, he had enough money to buy clothes of the best quality.

"Detective Moriarty, this is my son, Adol." Logo stopped at the edge of a carpet and pointed to a boy that was 15 or 16 years old and was sitting on a single sofa.

As all the fireplaces in the house were lit, and there were metallic pipes to conduct the heat around, the living room was rather warm. It even made Klein feel like taking off his clothes until he only had a shirt and a pair of trousers left. However, the boy was wrapped in a thick fur coat and had a blanket that looked burning hot on his legs.

At that moment, he had his head low, tightly hugging himself as he shivered nonstop. His dark blue hair seemed to have lost its luster.

Rogo looked at him with concern and raised his voice slightly, "Adol, this is Detective Moriarty. He will be protecting you for today and tomorrow."

At these words, Adol raised his head, revealing his pale face, his bluish lips, and his unfocused eyes.

“Protect me, protect me... They’re going to kill me! They want to kill me!” His voice became sharper and sharper. In the end, he covered his ears with his hands and screamed.

After a few seconds, he gradually calmed down.

During this process, Klein had already tapped his molars and secretly activated his Spirit Vision.

Huh... He held back the shock that had crept up to his mouth and carefully examined him again.

He saw that the color of Adol’s aura had been dyed with a deep blackish-green sheen!

This is a sign of being haunted by wraiths, a sign of possible possession!

Adol’s bad friends are already taking revenge on him... Or perhaps, there were no such things as “bad company” at all... Klein quietly reached out, held Mr. Azik’s copper whistle, and allowed his spirituality to spread. Then, he thoughtfully looked away from Adol and looked at the others inside the living room.

By the oriel window stood a man in a black coat. He was tall and sturdy, not smiling, and his waist was bulging as if he were hiding a gun.

This should be one of the six bodyguards... Klein was about to size up another person when Rogo Colloman introduced, “Detective Kaslana; her assistant, Lydia.

“Detective Stuart.”

At this point, Rogo turned around and pointed at Klein.

“This is Detective Sherlock Moriarty.”

Kaslana was in her thirties, had black hair and blue eyes, and thick eyebrows. She was probably a beauty when she was young, but now, because of the sagging muscles on her cheeks, she didn’t seem very amiable.

Lydia, her assistant, was a red-haired lady of about twenty years of age. Her figure was excellent, but she had an average appearance.

Both women wore something similar to what aristocratic riders wore. The white shirts they wore were tight at the waist which matched the more tight-fitting trousers that facilitated movement. The pleats were the only thing that distinguished their clothes from men.

In addition, they provided no concealment for the two revolvers around their waists.

This reminded Klein of a saying from Lawyer Jurgen that illegal possession of a gun was a sure thing for a private investigator. This was because—unless one was a noble, a Member of Parliament, or a senior civil servant—it was very difficult to obtain an all-purpose weapon permit.

Stuart sat opposite to Kaslana and Lydia. He had a lean face, but he grew a bushy beard. His light green eyes were unusually lively.

He was about the same age as Lydia, and almost as tall as Klein, a little over 1.7m and weighing 140lb.

Stuart had an underarm holster, and in it, there was obviously a specially designed revolver.

After exchanging pleasantries, Klein took off his coat, took off his hat, and handed it to the maidservant next to him.

“Put it somewhere I can retrieve it quickly from. There are some important items inside.”

In fact, he had already transferred the paper figurines, notes, charms, a matchbox, etc to his trouser pockets. The only thing left in his coat was herbal powder, extract essence, keys, and his wallet. There were a total of 206 pounds in paper bills in his wallet.

Stuart, who was sitting there, turned his head to size Klein up and chuckled. “You didn’t bring a gun?”

“Gun? This is my gun.” Klein smiled and raised his cane.

At the same time, he puffed out his cheeks to stimulate a sound.

Bang!

The sound of a gunshot rang out, and without thinking, Stuart rolled over, while Kaslana and Lydia quickly got off the sofa, each finding a place to hide.

Rogo and the servant beside him were both surprised and confused about what was happening. Adol continued keeping his head low as he shivered.

When they saw that Klein was only holding onto a black cane and realized that nothing had happened, Kaslana and company calmed down. They frowned and asked, “What just happened?”

“Ever since I handed a revolver I picked up to the police, I’ve been learning how to imitate its sound. It seems to be quite effective,” Klein replied half-jokingly.

“That’s not funny, Detective Moriarty,” Kaslana said in a deep voice.

I just wanted to perform some magic for you... Klein lampooned.

He handed his cane to the maidservant and solemnly nodded.

“I will keep that in mind.”

Stuart, who was in the most pathetic state a moment ago, didn’t seem to be angry at all. He patted his clothes with great interest, got up and asked, “Why haven’t I heard of you, Mr. Moriarty? I mean, I know a lot of people in the detective business, but I’ve not heard about you in the past.”

“I only came to Backlund in early September,” Klein briefly explained.

“Is that so...” Stuart laughed and said, “Tonight, the two of us will pair up. We’ll be in charge of everything from midnight until tomorrow morning. Will that be a problem?”

“Nope,” Klein responded with the same smile.

“Okay, after dinner, you guys have some rest and take over your shifts in the early morning,” Kaslana added.

Klein took a long look at the trembling Adol and nodded seriously.

...

Nothing happened throughout the afternoon, and the worried male and female hosts prepared a hearty dinner for the detectives and the bodyguards, but no alcoholic beverages were provided.

After eating and drinking to his heart's content, Klein and Stuart, a young man with a full beard, went to their rooms on the second floor.

Seeing that no one was around, Stuart shook his head and said, "Sherlock, you should've noticed that the problem with Adol isn't something regarding revenge."

Bro, you sure are affable... Klein's expression didn't change as he asked, "Why do you say that?"

"He looks more like he has a mental problem, or, according to the countryside, he's been haunted by ghosts and evil spirits. Frankly, I'm afraid of that." Stuart sighed. "Mr. Colloman should take him to a psychiatrist, and if that doesn't work, get the priests from the Lord of Storms to sprinkle some holy water and perform a ritual."

"You can suggest it to him," Klein said objectively.

"If Adol doesn't get better, I'll consider it in about a couple of days." Stuart glanced sideways at Klein.

Klein laughed and replied, "That's up to you. My mission will be over tomorrow."

At that moment, the two of them had arrived at their destination and entered their respective rooms.

...

One in the morning, inside Adol's bedroom.

Klein sat in a rocking chair, holding onto Azik's copper whistle, quietly watching his ward. Stuart sipped his coffee at his desk.

The two of them didn't speak, afraid that they would wake the sleeping Adol.

As time passed, a cold chill swept through the room.

Adol sat up and opened his eyes.

“What’s wrong?” Stuart asked somewhat nervously.

“To... the washroom...” Adol replied in a soft, dreamy voice.

His face seemed paler, and his lips were turning purple.

Stuart was about to speak when he saw Sherlock Moriarty stand up and nod at him.

“I’ll follow him.”

“Alright.” Stuart let out a sigh of relief.

Putting his hands into his pockets, Klein stayed one step behind Adol and followed him to the entrance of the washroom two rooms away.

Just as Adol was about to close the door behind him, he saw a figure flash in.

“I can’t let you out of my sight. Heh, do whatever you have to do, and pretend that I don’t exist.” Klein smiled and leaned against the wall.

Adol remained silent, his eyes unfocused as he looked into the mirror.

He turned on the faucet and let the water flow.

At this moment, Klein took out a box of matches and lit a matchstick, as though he wanted to smoke.

However, he didn’t do so. He blew on the air and allowed the match to go out.

Pa!

Klein casually threw the match in front of him and took out another item.

Adol, whose back was facing him, suddenly straightened up. The figure in the mirror was so pale that it looked like a corpse.

Whoosh! In the washroom, a cold wind howled. While keeping his lower body fixed, Adol turned around and glared at Klein’s left hand, at the delicate copper whistle that was being tossed up and down.

Whoosh!

A gust of cold wind blew across Klein's face.

He continued smiling and snapped his fingers.

With a loud bang, a flame rose from the ground, igniting an invisible figure.

The figure struggled for a few moments before completely dispersing. The flames extinguished as a result.

Klein put away Azik's copper whistle and looked calmly at Adol, whose eyes were beginning to focus.

Adol appeared to have finally awoken from a long nightmare.

He saw a young man standing a few steps away. The man was wearing a white shirt, dark trousers, and a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. He was leaning against the wall with a smile on his face.

Then, he heard a gentle voice.

"What happened to you?"

"What exactly happened?" Adol muttered this question softly and realized that he couldn't remember what he had done the past few days.

He looked around dreamily, frightened, panicked, and confused.

"Who are you?

"Where is this place?"

"This is your washroom. Don't you recognize it? I'm a private detective in charge of protecting you." Klein looked at the teenage boy who hadn't figured out the situation around him and chuckled in response.

"My house... Detective to protect me... What exactly happened..." Adol looked around in astonishment and murmured to himself.

Suddenly, he stopped; his already pale face filled with unconcealable fear.

"M-maybe there really are ghosts in this world! There really are ghosts!"

His voice was shaky, but Klein could hear two completely different feelings from his voice—fear and excitement—and these were perfectly depicted by the color of his emotions.

Excited? Did this boy end up provoking a wraith because of his thirst for excitement? It's true that the young are bold and unafraid of death... Klein made a preliminary guess, but he asked in confusion, "Ghosts?"

After becoming a Magician, his Spirit Vision had been slightly enhanced, but not by much. He was still unable to see the Astral Projection surface deep in the Ether Body and, as such, unable to judge whether the target was a Beyonder or not.

Adol's pale face suddenly flushed red.

"Yes, ghosts!"

He flailed his arms and added, "There exists a wider world beyond our senses! I'm serious! Death is not the end of everything!"

This line... He's indeed an adolescent... However, I think I've seen similar words somewhere... Klein smiled and said, "I believe in another saying—in the face of time that is even more ancient than ancientness, even death itself will disappear."

Without waiting for Adol to say anything, he took out his gold pocket watch, opened it and said, "So, how did you get yourself into the state you were in before? You were like a patient with a nervous breakdown."

"I..." Adol turned his head and thought for a few seconds, then he said, "I joined a society; it's not an ordinary society! We all believe that death is not the end. We can use mysticism to even sense death directly and understand that everything can be reversed. Yes, we believe that the dead can be resurrected!"

Klein, who had just climbed out of his grave more than a month ago chuckled dryly.

"You and the others were trying to revive the dead?"

Death is not the end... A world beyond the senses... Everything can be reversed. Mystic sensing... Aren't these the teachings of the Numinous Episcopate? These were all created to revive Death... He muttered to himself silently in enlightenment.

"Yes!" Adol nodded, his eyes bright, but completely unable to hide his fear.

"Where did you get your corpses?" Klein pressed.

"W-we will secretly dig up graves, those that haven't been buried for long, or buy them from the hospital..." Adol said as he recalled.

It's indeed a crime that can get you thrown into jail... It's no wonder that Rogo Colloman doesn't want the police involved... You sure are bold to get your thrills... Klein maintained his genial smile and asked, "And did you succeed?"

"Not yet... The way they looked at me during the last gathering was l-like they were looking at a corpse—as if they were wondering where to place their corresponding mystics... And then we danced a Spirit Dance and communicated with the world beyond with our senses, and

t-then, I lost all my memories since then...” Adol’s body began to tremble uncontrollably.

Spirit Dance? It really is the Numinous Episcopate... This fellow became a test subject for his companions? Klein frowned and asked, “Your memory is disconnected from that point until now?”

According to the internal records of the Nighthawks, “Spirit Dances” originated from the ancient sacrificial dances that were popular in the Southern Continent. It was the ritual method that Death loved.

A “Spirit Dance” was to use the beat, rhythm, and movements to harmonize one’s spirituality so that it could interact with the natural environment so as to establish an interaction with the target of the prayer. Then, combined with a simple altar arrangement and corresponding honorific name, it can achieve the effects of a more complex ritualistic magic.

“Yes,” Adol softly replied before he suddenly raised his head. “What day is it today? What time is it now?”

“Friday morning, 1:12 am,” Klein answered based on his memory.

Adol subconsciously took a deep breath and said, “I’ve missed the newest gathering...

“They conduct a resurrection ritual outside Grimm Cemetery every Friday at three in the morning.”

Grimm Cemetery got its name because it wasn’t far from Grimm Garden Street.

“You still wish to go? Have you forgotten what had happened to you? Oh, you don’t actually remember, but you should ask your father, your mother, and servants,” Klein reminded the young man in front of him.

And I might not be able to help you any further... He added silently in his heart.

After this incident, he discovered another weakness of a Magician, which was the lack of an ability to deal with wraiths and shadow-related creatures. Only the control of fire barely counted. But after those creatures possessed a human body, exorcism and purification

became a problem, unless he wanted to kill both the ghost and the human.

Of course, Klein wasn't completely helpless in this aspect. He could conduct ritualistic magic to do similar things, but that would be very troublesome. It would easily expose his identity and was unsuited for actual combat.

After some thought, he had finally chosen to use Azik's copper whistle to lure the wraith out. Then, he controlled the flames to complete the purification.

However, the level of damage wasn't high. If he were to encounter a slightly more powerful wraith, it was possible that he was unable to take care of it.

I still lack items or charms that deal with undead creatures. If only I had the Sealed Artifact 3-0782, Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem... Klein's thoughts were momentarily distracted.

Adol suddenly remembered his missing memories, and his face turned pale again. He answered with a trembling voice, "No, I don't want to go! I never want to go again!"

"Very good." Klein smiled in support.

Adol looked at his face which didn't contain the slightest bit of fear, and subconsciously asked, "Aren't you afraid after I've said so much?"

Klein stopped leaning against the wall and slowly straightened his body. He replied in a relaxed tone, "For a detective, they would rather not believe something unless there's concrete evidence."

He opened the door and walked out, wondering if he should make contact with the Numinous Episcopate. After all, this might involve the mystery of Mr. Azik's life.

Adol looked at the private detective's back in a daze. It took him quite some time to realize that there was no one in the washroom other than himself. Furthermore, the moonlight outside was so gloomy that it left long shadows, making it seem as though something invisible was lurking and watching.

He shivered and hurriedly shouted, “Wait for me!”

As he spoke, Adol quickened his pace, rushed out of the washroom, and followed closely behind Klein.

He knows fear and is apprehensive. That means he’s still redeemable... Klein mumbled before inserting his hands into his pockets.

When he returned to his bedroom, Stuart didn’t notice that Adol had already turned for the better. He still wore a serious expression from the ghost story he imagined himself, so he didn’t dare to walk around recklessly.

After Adol fell asleep again, Klein took out a copper penny and let it move between his fingers.

When it was close to 2:50 am, he threw up the coin and caught it firmly before standing up and whispered to Stuart, “I’ll be heading to the balcony to smoke a cigarette.”

“Be quick,” Stuart urged with somewhat taut nerves.

Klein put on his long gown and walked slowly out the door to the balcony at the end of the corridor. Then, he hid in the shadows.

Then, he pulled out a rather crudely cut paper figurine.

Pa!

Klein violently shook his wrist, causing the paper to make a crisp sound. The paper quickly expanded and turned into a human.

The person was about the same height as Klein, a wax statue intrinsically carved with the same exact facial features.

This was one of the uses of Paper Figurine Substitutes.

Soon, Klein focused his mind, clenched his right fist, and lightly tapped his body.

Without a sound, the figurine seemed to come alive. It even had a cigarette with a glowing red head in its mouth as the fragrance of tobacco wafted out.

“By delegating this figurine, this illusion can last half an hour... I’m really a magician!” Klein put on his gloves, reached out, and pushed himself over before sliding down the balcony stealthily, avoiding the patrolling security.

...

Outside Grimm Cemetery, in a secluded forest.

Klein stood among the treetops as he looked at the relatively open and flat area not too far away.

Around him were evergreen leaves and brown branches, but their surfaces were stained with gray dust.

From what Klein could see, there were about eight young men and women wearing long black robes dancing and twitching around a corpse.

The dance was full of rhythm, as though it had some sort of mysterious flavor to it.

The girl shook her long hair and the boy extended his hand while kneeling. This scene had a subtle connection to their surroundings. It was the rhythm of nature.

After they danced for three to four minutes, everything within a ten-meter radius was affected by a wild and confusing atmosphere. The atmosphere gradually turned sinister, and there was a hint of divinity mixed in it.

It really is a “Spirit Dance”... Ritualistic magic that even normal people can participate in... Klein cast his gaze away and looked at the man in black robes who was chanting an incantation beside the corpse.

Earlier, he was the one who was instructing those young boys and girls on how to perform the “Spirit Dance.”

He should be a member of the Numinous Episcopate, with a high probability of being a Beyonder... Klein nodded indiscernibly, intending to watch the resurrection ritual.

At this point, the dance reached its climax. The adult man in black lifted his head and took off his wig, revealing the strange tattoos engraved on his bald head.

He raised his hands and shouted, “Death!

“Honorable Death!

“Is about to return!”

After he finished shouting, the dancing stopped. The seven to eight youths stood on either side. They appeared to be in a daze, filled with anticipation, excitement, and fear.

Next, the man bent down and opened the iron cage at his feet, taking out a black object.

Klein looked over and saw that it was a green-eyed black cat.

Th-this works too? He was obviously stunned for a moment. Suddenly, he thought of the various folklore related to a black cat. For example, if a black cat which symbolized the evil emissary of hell jumped over a corpse, the corpse would be awakened.

This was the first time Klein was seeing someone use a similar method in a ritual.

The man stepped forward while restraining the black cat from struggling before throwing it at the corpse.

Meow!

All the black cat’s hairs stood on end as it hissed and leaped over the corpse.

At that moment, Klein felt like he could understand cat language. He believed that the cat must have said one word, “Fuck!”

Chapter 301: Awakening

Meow!

The black cat's cry echoed in the open area that was surrounded by the secluded forest. Regardless of whether it was the adult black-robed man or the fifteen-or sixteen-year-old boys and girls, all of them simultaneously cast their gaze onto the corpse lying in the middle.

A gust of cold wind blew, and the black cat landed on the ground, staring at the human who had just thrown it. It kept flicking its tail around.

All of a sudden, its fur stood on end again. Then, exerting great force with its hind limbs, it jumped up and fled in another direction.

Unfortunately, whatever it did had failed to attract any attention. All the humans present had their attention focused on the motionless corpse.

Seconds turned to minutes, but the corpse didn't undergo any anticipated changes.

"Another failure?" One of the teenagers moved closer and crouched down, poking at the dead man's skin with his fingers.

"There's no reaction." He turned around halfway and spoke to the man in black and his companions.

At this moment, he felt a gust of wind hit his face from beneath him.

With a swoosh, the corpse sat up!

The youth was startled and immediately cheered in surprise,

"It's a success! It's a success..."

Before he could finish his sentence, the corpse grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him into its arms. Then, it opened its mouth and bit down, producing a sound and causing blood to splatter.

"Ah! Help!" the youth screamed in horror and retreated with all his might, but he couldn't break free.

The corpse raised its head, revealing rows of white teeth, as well as bits of flesh hanging between its teeth, and blood flowing from its mouth.

The black-robed man was stunned for a moment, then he took out a whistle that was brass in color. He put it in his mouth, and blew on it.

Then, he said in Hermes, “I command you in the name of Death!”

As his voice echoed in the air, the corpse stopped chewing and momentarily froze on the spot.

The youth, whose neck and shoulders had been mangled by the bite, similarly collapsed as if he had lost his soul. The dirt around his nether regions was completely moist.

“It really is possible...” the black-robed man muttered in pleasant surprise. He pointed at the corpse and once again said in Hermes, “Get up!”

The corpse abruptly stood up, then it threw back its shoulders before quickly running into the depths of the secluded forest.

“Come back!” the black-robed man cried out in surprise, but the corpse showed no signs of stopping.

He blew his whistle again and shouted with dignity, “I command you to return in the name of Death!”

With those words, the corpse disappeared into the woods.

“I ordered you to return...” the black-robed man stood rooted to the spot in stupefaction as he mumbled to himself in a daze.

In the woods, Klein held Azik’s copper whistle and the matchbox in one hand. He kept lighting matchsticks and shook his wrist to extinguish them before throwing them to the ground.

During this process, he moved backwards in an arc.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

A corpse with a pale face and a foul stench rushed over. Its lifeless eyes stared straight at the ancient and exquisite copper whistle.

As Klein retreated, his cheeks puffed out, he aimed at the corpse and simulated the sound:

Bang!

The corpse suddenly staggered as a penetrating wound appeared in its chest.

Bang!

Klein puffed out his cheeks again and fired another Air Bullet.

Splat! The head of the corpse shattered as rotten liquid dripped from it incessantly.

However, that wasn't a fatal injury to the corpse. It only slowed down for a moment before it continued again.

Upon seeing this, Klein took a step back and snapped loudly.

Pa!

A bright flame rose from the ground, enveloping the corpse and igniting its outer garments.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The corpse rushed through the flames and continued to charge forward like a mad bull.

Pa! Pa! Pa! Klein kept snapping his fingers, causing red flames to appear on the ground, one after another.

The corpse didn't feel any pain as it passed through the flames, but gradually, its body began to burn, and the flames grew more and more intense. It gave off the strange feeling as though a candle was melting.

Finally, the corpse, which had turned into a torch, arrived in front of Klein as it clawed at him.

At the same time, a flame rose up and engulfed both him and Klein.

The corpse grabbed Klein's shoulder but only produced sparks.

Klein's figure dissipated in the red light and reappeared in the farthest burning pile.

At that point, the corpse seemed to have exhausted all of its strength and stopped struggling. It quickly melted under the dark green flames, turning into ashes and oil wax.

He's stronger than all the zombies and wraiths that I've met before. Well, not as good as Mr. Azik's descendant... If it weren't for me, they would all be dead here today. Klein shook his head and walked through the trees toward the open area.

At this moment, the black-robed man had already noticed the changes in the forest. Without any hesitation, he turned around and ran, while the seven to eight youngsters scattered in a flash. However, when they realized that they were the only ones in the area, they timidly stopped and returned to the original area where they gathered together.

Having just experienced the awakening of a corpse, and how the corpse had bitten one of the youths, they didn't dare to run away, alone, in the deep, dark night.

It would make the back of their necks feel cold.

They looked at each other. No one dared to help the youth who was badly mutilated in the neck and shoulders, afraid that he might turn into a zombie at any moment.

In the short silence that made their hearts beat like a drum, they saw a clown, wearing flashy clothes with red, yellow, and white paint covering his face, walking out from the forest.

This was an illusion that was personally created by Klein.

He surveyed his surroundings but didn't pursue the black-robed man. Instead, he asked in a hoarse voice, "Who was the one who presided over the ceremony?"

Who? It seemed as if the teenagers were still in a daze. It took them a few seconds before they pushed out a trembling boy who replied, "He... he's our language teacher in ancient Feysac, Kapusky Reid...

"He claimed to have a deep understanding of death and wanted to lead us in the search of the mysteries of immortality."

So he's a teacher from school... The mysteries of immortality? You really don't need to pay taxes to brag... Judging from his performance just now, this fellow shouldn't be a Spirit Medium. At the very most, he would be a Gravedigger. In fact, he might only be at Sequence 9, a Corpse Collector... Of course, he might not be from the Death pathway and simply joined the Numinous Episcopate because of his adoration...
After Klein got the exact location where Kapusky stayed, he thought for a moment and said, "You guys can go back now. Don't get involved in this anymore. Don't leak this out.

"Otherwise, all of you will die."

Then, he emphasized again, "All of you will die."

The young boys and girls who had been scared witless by what had just happened all frantically nodded. They prepared to leave with each other's help.

At this moment, a young girl with smooth hair pointed at her companion who was moaning in pain on the ground and asked,

"Will... will he be alright?"

"He won't die for now, but you have to take him to a doctor. Say that he was bitten by a hyena that often eats rotting meat." Klein ignored them and headed back into the woods.

The young man and woman looked at each other, and someone blurted out, "Ex-excuse me, may I ask, how we should address you?"

Klein smiled and deliberately misled him as he replied in a low voice, "I'm just a gatekeeper of hell."

As he spoke, a mist spread out, and his figure disappeared from where he stood.

Of course, those were all illusions.

"A gatekeeper of hell?" The young men and women repeated the words softly, each having their own thoughts.

However, after a gust of bone-piercing cold wind blew past, they trembled once more, supported their companions, and left the place without daring to look back.

...

This is a member of the Numinous Episcopate? What a disappointment... If he didn't abandon his current identity, I would pay him a visit in the middle of the night to see if he knows anything. Yeah, I have to teach him a lesson so that he wouldn't dare to bring trouble to the students again. Does he think Spirit Dances and resurrection rituals are child's play? Klein habitually judged the situation from a Nighthawk's standpoint.

Soon, he returned to Rogo Colloman's mansion and waited patiently for the bodyguards to pass by during their patrols.

As soon as he found an opportunity, he climbed over the fence and quickly followed the shadows to the house, then he quietly climbed up to the balcony.

At that moment, the figurine disguised as him was still smoking.

Pa! Klein snapped his fingers.

The figure in front of him turned into a thin piece of paper and floated onto his palm.

Compared to before, this piece of paper was covered with red, rusty marks and was no longer usable.

Klein didn't dare to throw it anywhere. He folded it and placed it in his pocket.

Having done all this, he sauntered back down the hall and into Adol's bedroom.

"What took you so long?" Stuart asked in a trembling voice.

He had gone to the door to inquire, and he had found Sherlock Moriarty smoking one cigarette after another. Due to his duty, he didn't dare leave the bedroom.

Klein laughed and replied, "Take a rest and relax. You can go too, I don't mind."

"I..." Just as Stuart was about to agree, he suddenly thought of something—he would end up being the only person on the balcony,

surrounded by the dark night and without sufficient brightness. There would be a cold wind and an environment that always reminded one of a ghost story.

Therefore, he forced a smile and said, “It’s fine, I don’t need it.”

Klein smiled silently and sat down again, letting the reclining chair rock gently and slowly in the night.

This continued till daybreak. Nothing else happened.

When Adol woke up, he sat up in bed, lost in thought.

Klein didn’t say anything, but he swapped places with Kaslana and her assistant and slowly walked to the guest room to catch up on his sleep.

He was asleep when he heard Rogo Colloman exclaim in pleasant surprise, “Oh, my boy, you’re fine now?

“Holy Lord of Storms, I’ll donate 300 pounds to the Church!

“Y-you are telling me that they won’t kill you? It was all a misunderstanding?”

300 pounds? How extravagant... Klein rolled over and wrapped his arms around the soft, warm quilt while mumbling.

Then, he went back to sleep.

At noon, when Klein went downstairs to have a meal, Kaslana sat opposite him and asked with a slight frown, “What happened last night?”

“Nothing,” Klein answered simply, and then he laughed. “Does Adol waking up and going to the washroom count?”

Next to him, Stuart slowed down his actions and nodded in agreement.

She glanced at their faces, then she retracted her gaze and replied in a low voice, “No.”

The corner of Klein’s mouth curled up as he skillfully cut his steak.

Chapter 302: A Clue

The detective, who had been on leave, returned to Grimm Garden Street shortly after Klein and the others had finished their lunch. This also meant that his assignment was over.

Due to the visible improvement in Adol's situation, Rogo Colloman was quite generous in the settlement of his pay, and he paid an additional fifty percent above the ten pounds which they had agreed upon.

As expected of a jewelry businessman to be this generous. However, compared to the other people in West Borough and Empress Borough, he isn't considered that rich. Grimm Garden Street is close to the suburbs, and it's not too far from the cemetery. I can reach it in ten minutes if I run at full speed... Eh, Miss Bodyguard, no—Miss Sharron, is highly likely of being a Sequence 5 Beyonder. She charges one thousand pounds for three days, while I, as a Sequence 7 Beyonder, am only worth fifteen pounds a day. There's still a big difference...

Of course, if I were to take on such missions every day, my income would be over 5,400 pounds a year, putting me at the top of the middle class. Even the top manager of the Backlund Bank makes 5,000 pounds a year... Heh heh, this is just pure fantasy. For most detectives, business comes sporadically... And the amount of Beyonder ingredients I need to advance to Sequence 6 is definitely more than 3,000 pounds. Just thinking about it makes my head hurt. For normal people, this is a huge sum of money, enough to sustain a good life!

The good news is that even if I grasp the "acting method," digesting the Sequence 7 potion will take me somewhere between six months to three years. Even if I can quickly conclude the rules of a Magician, I'll only be able to push forward that lowest threshold by one to two months. I still have plenty of time to save up and search for clues to these ingredients...

Wait. Miss Justice still owes me, uh—my Blessed 5,000 pounds...

However, her financial situation isn't in good shape recently. It will be difficult for her to come up with a large sum of cash in the next few months...

Klein took the three five-pound notes and left West Borough with thoughts running through his mind.

After returning to Minsk Street, he quickly burned the used paper figurine and made another two more.

In the evening, he took the steam metro to the Backlund Bridge district, and according to the numbers provided in the newspapers, he knocked on the door of the house where the gathering would take place.

Similar to the past few times, he put on an iron mask that covered only the upper half of his face, wore a hooded black robe, and followed the attendant into the activity room, where only one candle burned quietly.

At first glance, Klein noticed that the number of Beyonders present at this gathering was less than half of what it used to be.

I came at the exact time. Are the others late? This time, Klein didn't change his gait and picked a corner before sitting down slowly.

After a few minutes, the old Eye of Wisdom cleared his throat and said, "Let's begin the gathering. The others shouldn't be coming."

After saying that, he gave a brief explanation.

"As the serial killer has yet to be found, the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind, as well as a large number of MI9 Beyonders, are out doing large-scale investigations and searches.

"Under such a situation, it's very normal and understandable for those friends to be unwilling to go out and participate in gatherings.

"Frankly, I'm surprised by the number of people that showed up today."

Sure enough, a circle of Beyonders isn't isolated; they would also be affected by current affairs... Klein looked around and saw that the fat Apothecary wasn't absent. His heart immediately relaxed.

The Apothecary nudged the metal mask on his face, calling out without much hope, "Seeking to purchase the Spring of Elves marrow crystals. Price is negotiable."

"I have it," Klein said without hesitation.

He was worried that someone else might've found this Beyonder ingredient, thereby causing the price of his stock of goods to fall.

Although Beyonder ingredients were rare, and it was rare for items to reappear in independent circles, one could never be too careful.

"Seeking to purchase the Spring of Elves marrow crystals..." The Apothecary didn't seem to hear the response.

He was halfway through the sentence when it suddenly struck him. He turned his head to look at Klein and blurted, "You do?" "Yes." Klein found his fiery gaze a little too overwhelming.

As he did so, he rolled up his black robe and took out an iron cigar case.

Pa! Klein opened the cigar case, revealing the faded, egg-shaped Spring of Elves marrow crystal.

"If you're worried, you can let the Old Mister Eye of Wisdom appraise it," Klein added in a low voice.

This wasn't really necessary because it was obvious if something was a Beyonder ingredient or not. It was also quickly identified if something was contaminated or not.

However, if one was lacking in mysticism knowledge, a Beyonder ingredient could very easily be mixed up with similarlooking ingredients. When that happened, one needed an appraisal.

The Apothecary looked like he was looking at a beautiful lady he had been yearning for all this time. He looked at the Beyonder ingredient in Klein's hands, mesmerized. After a few seconds, he shook his head and said, "No, there's no need! That's it! That's it!" Klein curved the corner of his lips into a smile and named his price.

"300 pounds and clues to the Apothecary formula."

"Clues to the Apothecary formula... It's you!" The Apothecary was stunned for a moment before he finally understood who the man was.

It was the guy who made him bring the sedative for nothing!

Soon after, his heart pained, his regret similarly reaching its limit as he sighed emotionally. “You really are a lucky guy!

“Why didn’t I choose that road of fortune...”

I’m the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck after all... Klein lampooned himself.

The Apothecary sighed and changed his posture.

“That’s too expensive. 200 pounds and a clue to the formula.”

“The clue to the formula is only a bonus because I cannot confirm its veracity. Therefore, 300 pounds, not a penny less, I believe it’s needed elsewhere.” Klein smiled. “This price is actually very fair. If it were anyone else, they might’ve offered 400 or even 500 pounds, and you might’ve even accepted that price.”

“I’m not that foolish. I can still wait...” The apothecary grumbled before saying, “The clue can be verified by Old Man, uh—Old Mister Eye of Wisdom.”

“It must be something that exists objectively, something that has detailed information before I’m able to appraise it. Just a clue isn’t among these conditions,” Eye of Wisdom said.

Divination, on the other hand, can roughly determine whether the clue is effective as long as it doesn’t involve powers two or three Sequences above myself... Klein silently said to himself.

However, he wouldn’t reveal his expertise in divination at a Beyonder gathering.

“Alright then... 300 pounds plus the clue. You lucked out!” The Apothecary took a deep breath and pulled out a thick wad of cash. He then counted the corresponding amount and then asked the attendant to bring him a pen and paper before he started writing.

After he was done writing the clue, he crumpled the paper into a ball and handed it along with the cash and some items to the attendant.

Klein was suddenly stunned when he saw the attendant walk over.

In addition to the cash and clue, there were also four glass tubes filled with what seemed to be pure liquids.

"What are these?" Klein asked, perplexed.

"Have you forgotten? Your sedative, the sedative I specially concocted. It's ten soli a bottle, two pounds for four, so the cash there is 298 pounds," answered the Apothecary. "If you're worried about my sedative, you can have it appraised."

I really forgot... I did all of that to gain Miss Sharron's trust, and now that she's not here, well... It's fine; maybe a sedative would be able to handle some unexpected situations... Klein stopped talking, took out the Spring of Elves marrow crystal, took the items, counted the cash in front of everyone, and determined their authenticity with the faint candlelight.

A total of 298 pounds... That's right... Seeing that his wallet could no longer hold any more cash, Klein could only roll up the bills and slip them into his pocket.

After putting away the sedative, he unfolded the note and glanced at the clue.

"On the south side of the Bridge, on Rose Street, at the Harvest Church, find Bishop Utravsky. As long as you help him complete a mission, you'll be able to get the Apothecary formula."

Harvest Church. That's one of the few cathedrals of the Church of Earth Mother in the kingdom. This Church also grasps two Beyonder pathways: "Planter" and "Apothecary"... The clues match well... Klein thought as he refolded the note.

As the gathering continued, it was unknown whether the female Beyonder with the Artisan backing her wasn't present, or she just didn't have any new Beyonder weapons to sell. There were no signs of her, leaving Klein disappointed. Now that he had 509 pounds in hand, he wanted to equip himself nicely.

After many transactions were aborted, a man sitting on a stool said in a low voice, "A friend of mine was unfortunately discovered in this

investigation. He's imprisoned in a particular Lord of Storms cathedral by the Mandated Punishers. I wish to hire a few helpers to rescue him."

Eye of Wisdom immediately replied, "Stray Dog, give up that thought! A cathedral's Mandated Punishers and Sealed Artifacts are enough to destroy all of us here.

"Your friend's fate has already been decided. Don't let yourself be trapped in the same situation."

Stray Dog looked around and realized that no one responded to his request. He couldn't help but thump his thigh, growling, "But, what did he do wrong?

"He's an excellent physician. He's saved a lot of patients and has never hurt anyone! Just because he consumed a potion and became a Beyonder, he's to be imprisoned in a place where the sun never shines. He'll even become an experimental subject for the Mandated Punishers?

"Why?

"Why..."

Stray Dog's agonized questions echoed in the room. Even the Apothecary, who couldn't keep his mouth shut, remained silent.

Sigh... Klein, a former official Beyonder, could only sigh deeply in his heart.

Without the spread of the "acting method," wild Beyonders are ticking time bombs...

But if the "acting method" is popularized, then the situation would become even more chaotic and bloody... After all, there are the Laws of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation...

In this heavy atmosphere, the gathering came to an end. Klein, who had gotten nothing else, spoke again.

"Who has revolvers and bullets that come augmented with different Beyonder effects?

"For example, purification, demon-hunting, etc."

He didn’t specifically fix the caliber of the bullets because he didn’t have a gun yet. He could simply wait until he bought the bullets before matching the corresponding gun.

In the midst of the silence, a female Beyonder sitting in the same corner replied in a low voice, “I can help you ask, and I’ll give you the answer at the next gathering.”

It seemed to be the lady with the Artisan backing her... Klein sighed.

“Alright.”

After the gathering ended, he didn’t return to Minsk Street directly. Instead, he went to East Borough and changed his clothes, heading to the border between North Borough and Hillston Borough.

It was where the suspected member of the Numinous

Episcopate, Kapusky Reid, lived.

Chapter 303: Rookie

North Borough, Aulka Street.

Kapusky Reid was sitting in a reclining chair in his activity room, lost in thought. In front of him was a fireplace burning with charcoal.

As a senior educator at a public school, he received a salary of more than four pounds a week, which was enough for a bachelor like him to live quite well, but the clothes he wore at home were patched up, and the teacups on the table looked extremely simple.

Without taking off his wig, the most striking thing about Kapusky was his high cheekbones and puffed-up chest—a deformity in which the sternum protruded outwards.

On his knee was a book of poems in ancient Feysac, but he hadn't flipped a single page even after some time had passed.

Kapusky's eyes were unfocused as he stared blankly when he suddenly heard a light chuckle in his ear.

"I'm very curious as to why you didn't run and chose to remain at home. Aren't you afraid of the police coming for you?"

The voice was low and hoarse, like a boy whose voice was cracking during puberty.

Kapusky shuddered and almost jumped out of his reclining chair.

He abruptly turned his head to look and saw that there was a figure sitting on the sofa a few steps away from him!

The figure wore summer wear—a linen shirt and light trousers. Its face was hazy and indistinct.

"Wh-who are you? What are you doing here?" Kapusky asked immediately as he gripped the armrest.

Klein, who had used his hallucination powers, leaned back, crossed his hands, and leisurely said, "Just last night, heh, it should be earlier this morning, I saved all of you."

“Saved us?” Kapusky relaxed a little when he realized that the intruder didn’t seem to mean any harm. “Y-you’re that person in the forest? You took care of the corpse we awakened?”

As he spoke, he moved awkwardly, showing obvious fear.

He was able to infiltrate without me realizing it while I was awake. I definitely wouldn’t be able to resist... Such thoughts quickly flashed through Kapusky’s mind.

“You guys are quite lucky that I happened to pass by; otherwise, there would only be corpses left strewn on the ground in the forest—corpses that would’ve been bitten to shreds.” Klein laughed. “Answer my previous question, I’m very curious why you stayed at home. Do you know what crimes you’ve committed?”

From the way that he had conducted the resurrection ritual and the reaction he had before and after the ritual, Klein had confirmed that Kapusky was a rookie who didn’t have the means to hide his true emotions. Therefore, he intended to only use Spirit Vision and interrogation to get to the bottom of the matter. At most, he would verify it with divination at the end.

“I-I know, secretly buying corpses and robbing corpses from tombs. These are all crimes that can land me in jail for more than ten years. Moreover, I’ll definitely be punished by the Church.” Kapusky, who didn’t look thirty, drew a breath and said with a wry smile, “However, as long as I didn’t cause too much trouble, those children and their parents wouldn’t snitch on me because they also did the same thing. Even if they wanted to get a lighter sentence by helping the investigation by turning themselves in, they would still end up in jail for some time.”

“Heh.” Kapusky gave a self-deprecating laugh. “Some of the children have already told their parents who I am. They’ve gotten gangsters to warn me to resign within a week and stay away from school. I agreed.”

Klein gently nodded his head.

“It’s a good thing to change environments. Of course, don’t do similar things again. Bewitching ignorant children to commit crimes is a heinous act.”

“I won’t, never again. I never imagined that it would be that dangerous. I just saw that they had the same interests as I did which was why I wanted to teach them and lead them to search for the secrets of immortality. As for digging graves, many doctors did it a long time ago.” Kapusky sighed with some lingering fear.

The color of his emotions matches his current state of mind...

From the sound of it, he doesn’t seem to be a member of the Numinous Episcopate... Klein thought for a moment, then he bluntly asked, “Where did you learn the Spirit Dance from?”

“Spirit Dance? Ah, I usually call it the Dance of Death.” Kapusky was taken aback at first before he came to a realization. “An old gentleman taught it to me.”

“An old gentleman?” Klein pressed.

Kapusky’s mind turned adrift as he recalled his memories.

“He was a tramp. He fainted in front of my house because of a serious illness.

“At the time, I didn’t know that he was ill. I thought he had simply fallen unconscious, so I helped him home. I gave him a heated towel and applied some ointment for him.

“After he woke up, he told me not to send him to a hospital or clinic and that death was not the end.

“I experienced the deaths of my parents and several relatives and was very interested in such things. So, I chatted with him and found out that he had profound knowledge and an admirable philosophy in this area. He seemed to be very satisfied with my curiosity and even performed a miracle of killing a mosquito and waking it up.”

This introduction... I’ve read at least ten novels with similar openings in my previous life. They were all novels about bringing an old

grandpa, who was on the brink of death, home out of kindness, only to have a fortuitous encounter... Klein's mouth twitched.

"So, you left him at home?"

Kapusky nodded solemnly and said, "Yes. If it wasn't for the lack of time, I would have even wanted to become his student.

"During those few days, he taught me a lot of knowledge and the Dance of Death. Unfortunately, this period of time was too brief. As soon as I built momentum, he died, leaving behind only a copper whistle."

Before he finished his sentence, Kapusky took out an exquisite copper whistle that didn't seem old.

"This is it."

I have one too... It's probably at the Ancestor grade though... Klein lampooned, and he thoughtfully asked, "How long ago was this? What did he look like? Where did you bury him?"

"Half a year ago. His most obvious feature was his graying hair and red spots on the side of his face. He told me to bury him in the garden out back." Kapusky did a calculation of the dates.

It's not Mr. Azik, but the chances are that he's a member of the Numinous Episcopate and not someone of a low Sequence... Klein changed the subject and asked, "Apart from the Spirit Dance, you also learned the resurrection ritual?"

"I've only learned half of that ritual. I used some scattered knowledge and folklore to slowly improve it bit by bit," Kapusky answered very honestly.

Improved it based on folklore? Oh, that poor black cat, may the Goddess bless you... Klein resisted the urge to draw a crimson moon on his chest.

"What else?" he pressed.

"Yes, and this copper whistle. I think it's the key to communicating with the world beyond our senses." Kapusky raised it and blew at it,

sighing. “Every time I finish blowing it, I can feel the surroundings turn cold. It’s as if someone is watching me and tugging at me...”

While he was speaking, Klein, who had his Spirit Vision activated, saw water patterns ripple out from the ground. A cold air spread out alongside it, and the fire and light dimmed a little.

Next, a skull with three protruding, unfocused eyes emerged from the ground. Around the skull, there were many black jointed tentacles.

A tentacle reached out, touching Kapusky’s leg and tugged at his clothes from time to time, appearing rather impatient. However, Kapusky didn’t respond at all, as though he hadn’t noticed.

Is this a messenger? The copper whistle is used to summon their corresponding messengers... What’s the meaning of you summoning it without giving it a letter? Klein was stunned seeing this scene.

At that moment, Kapusky looked at him excitedly.

“Did you feel it? The surroundings turned cold! The gas lamps have dimmed too!

“I’m not lying! Someone is watching me and tugging at me!”

The horrific-looking messenger tried to touch Kapusky, over and over again, but in the end, it didn’t receive a letter and went back “underground” in resignation.

The corners of Klein’s mouth twitched slightly as he saw this scene. He whispered to himself in his heart, *I take back what I said about him. He’s not a rookie, he’s an utter noob.*

He’s not even a Beyonder!

I had thought that he was someone who had just stepped through the door of mysticism to learn the basics, but now, it seems like he hasn’t even found the location of the door...

Corpse Collectors of the Death Sequence pathway can all see ghosts and spirit bodies directly...

Combined with how Kapusky had acted by using the copper whistle to command the zombie after the ritual, Klein was convinced that he wasn't lying. He sighed silently.

Then, he thought of a question, *If I were to write a note and hand it to that messenger, where would it be delivered?*

A true member of the Numinous Episcopate? Some senior member?

Suppressing this thought, Klein nodded and said, "It has indeed turned cold."

After replying, he quickly changed the topic. "Have you felt anything unusual since the old gentleman's death?"

"Eh... Not before, but in the last two weeks, I'd have the occasional feeling that someone around me is like a corpse—the kind that can be awoken." Kapusky asked feeling both curious and afraid, "Is it a hallucination?"

It's in line with what Adol said. He isn't lying... Klein stole a glance at the colors of Kapusky's aura and sincerely told him, "I suggest that you go to a cathedral at least three times a week for the next two months, attend mass, and listen to preachings.

"If you do not wish to do so, you can first prepare a grave for yourself."

"Alright..." Kapusky answered, feeling disappointed.

He thought that it was a manifestation of his improvement!

Klein contemplated for a moment and said in a commanding tone, "Take me to the old gentleman's corpse."

"Ah? Okay." Kapusky was about to refuse, but then he instantly recognized the reality of the situation he was in.

He picked up his tools and led Klein out the back door from the kitchen, into a withered garden, and stopped in front of a slanted tree.

Klein stood by his side and watched Kapusky skillfully dig through the dirt, revealing the slate underneath.

Having finished with the upper layer, Kapusky used his tools to pry open the slate.

Oof!

The slate was pressed against the soil that had been dug out just moments ago. The not-so-deep tomb was veiled in the crimson moon's luster that faintly penetrated through the clouds.

Kapusky subconsciously looked over when he suddenly let out a miserable scream, retreated a few steps, and fell to the ground.

There was no rotting corpse or bones in the tomb. The bottom layer was littered with white feathers, dyed in yellow oil!

White Feathers?

Looking at the corpseless grave, Klein suddenly thought of a word: "Angel!"

In the canon of the seven major Churches, they were filled with legends of Angels and Saints. The former had one characteristic —a pair of pure white wings on its back, and as many as two, three, or even six pairs of pure white wings.

However, in the blink of an eye, Klein remembered something else

Mr. Azik had once described his dream to him—one that seemed to indicate his different lives.

One of the scenes was inside a dark mausoleum. There were many opened ancient coffins beside him, and in the coffins, there were corpses with white feathers growing from their backs!

Is this a special characteristic of the Death pathway, or a strange phenomenon caused by the Numinous Episcopate? Klein didn't say a word as he restrained his emotions and calmly looked at the white feathers stained with yellowish oil at the bottom of the grave.

His initial judgment was that the old gentleman wasn't an angel, as the terrifying Sequence 2, or even Sequence 1 Beyonders, would certainly produce intense effects on their surroundings when they died. For example, the Holy Artifact, the ashes of a Saint which had been stored behind Tingen City's Chanis Gate, would extend almost invisible thin, black, and cold lines so as to seal the people and things around it.

Of course, it's also possible that he didn't actually die... He's like Mr. Azik? Klein bent down and picked up three white feathers with his black-gloved right hand.

He planned to do some divination above the gray fog when he returned home.

At that moment, Kapusky came to his senses, scrambled to Klein's side, and looked at the grave with a hint of fear.

"Where's the body?"

Klein looked at him and said in a low voice, “Maybe he left by himself”

“He left by himself...” Kapusky repeated in horror, now fully aware of how terrible it was for the dead to awaken.

His legs trembled as he muttered to himself, “B-but I didn’t use the resurrection ritual on him.”

Klein turned around and looked at him for a few seconds.

“Death is not the end.”

“Death is not the end... Death is not the end...” Kapusky was quite frightened by his own beliefs as he blurted out, “W-will he come back?”

Well, the copper whistle had summoned a messenger which probably corresponds to the old gentleman. In other words, by giving the messenger a letter, it is equivalent to sending a letter to the old gentleman—a man who has been dead for almost half a year... Heh, I wonder where he went and what kind of state he’s in... In response to Kapusky’s question, Klein gave him an indifferent reminder.

“Don’t blow that copper whistle again.”

“You mean the copper whistle will draw him back?” Kapusky asked in horror.

Before Klein could reply, he asked again, “C-can you help me throw this copper whistle into the Tussock River?

“If you can’t, I-I’ll do it myself.”

Weren’t you interested in the philosophy of death? Klein lampooned as he reached out to take Kapusky’s copper whistle.

He was planning on sending the dead man a letter when the conditions were right to see what would happen.

Of course, the prerequisite for all of this was that he was certain that there wasn’t too much danger involved.

After instructing Kapusky to fill up the grave again, Klein had a brief exchange with him about the “Spirit Dance” and the corresponding mysticism knowledge, enriching his own knowledge. He also asked

Kapusky in detail about how he laid the old gentleman's body, facing down, in accordance with his last words.

Under certain special circumstances, using "Spirit Dance" to replace part of the cumbersome setup for ritualistic magic would be more effective and simple... Seeing that he had achieved his goal, Klein warned Kapusky to stop dabbling with the so-called resurrection rituals.

Then, he left the street through the garden and took a long detour via carriage to East Borough.

After changing back into his previous clothes, he returned to Minsk Street and entered his bedroom. After a series of actions, he carried the three white feathers and Kapusky's copper whistle above the gray fog.

Seated in The Fool's high back chair, Klein conjured pen and a paper. He wrote a divination statement he had long thought of: "Its origins."

Then, he held the three white feathers and leaned back in his chair.

As he chanted silently, Klein entered a dreamland. It was a blurry grayish-white all around him.

In this world, there was rich darkness without any light. Suddenly, the darkness was dyed with a crimson shade. A thin, pale hand reached out of the yellowish-brown soil.

A figure slowly got up. He didn't lift the stone slab, but he pierced through the soil directly.

Under the crimson red moonlight, the clothes on the figure's back were tattered, and white feathers grew out one after another.

The white-haired man tilted his head, revealing the red spots on his face, as well as his blank, emotionless eyes.

It began to walk, struggling through the surrounding fences, heading deeper into the darkness until it disappeared far away.

The dream shattered and Klein woke up.

White feathers sprouted from the back of the corpse... Its state resembles Miss Sharron's, but it's clearly different as well. It gave off

a very heavy and corporeal feeling... It seemed to be phasing between a human's body and a spirit's body in a semi-natural and incomplete transformation? An envoy that's connected to the real world and the spirit world and Underworld? Klein tapped the edge of the long table and thought for quite a while.

Then, he divined whether there was any danger in using the copper whistle he received from Kapusky at that very moment and received a positive answer. Furthermore, the spirit pendulum moved with great amplitude and high frequencies.

It's a pity that I can't directly use the copper whistle above the gray fog. The messenger wouldn't be able to enter at all; otherwise, there wouldn't be any danger... After muttering to himself, Klein descended through the gray fog and returned to the real world.

...

Early morning, in the relatively refreshing woods in Empress Borough.

The Apothecary, with a round face who was in his thirties, appeared in a secluded corner and stored the herbs that he had secretly planted into a leather bag that he carried around with him.

After completing the mission for the day, he straightened his back, and he began to stretch his body. He mumbled to himself in great satisfaction, "Sure enough, my physical constitution has improved. I'm no longer like what I was before where I was relatively resistant to poisonous elements.

"However... Why is my Sequence 8 Beast Tamer? What does this have to do with Apothecary?

"Well, an Apothecary tames and uses plants and parts of animals that have lost their lives, while a Beast Tamer tames and uses living animals. Does it include Beyonder creatures?

"Then, will my Sequence 7 be able to tame and use humans?

"The old geezer didn't even tell me the name of Sequence 7, nor did he give me the formula. When I stabilize, I'll have to try contacting him."

The Apothecary began punching and kicking to get used to his strengthened body. He only stopped when he was utterly exhausted.

Whoosh... While panting, he began to consider a serious problem: *How should a Beast Tamer act?*

“Beast Tamer... how should it be done? Look for animals and tame them?” As the Apothecary was mumbling to himself, he suddenly sensed something and looked towards the artificial lake.

There was a huge golden retriever running happily.

The large golden retriever seemed to notice his gaze as it suddenly turned its head to look at him.

As their gazes met in midair, the large golden retriever froze for a moment. Then, it nimbly turned around and ran away, disappearing without a trace.

...

In the Hall family’s luxurious villa.

Susie returned to a piano room and sat beside Audrey’s feet, her tongue hanging out as she panted heavily.

It waited until the blonde girl finished playing a song before it said in fear, “Audrey, I met a scary guy.

“His eyes were scary!”

“Is that so? What did he want to do to you?” Audrey asked, curious and concerned.

Susie thought for a moment and said, “I don’t know either. In short, he’s very dangerous. That was my intuition.”

“What does he look like?” Audrey considered letting the guards and attendants warn the man.

“I didn’t see him clearly. I feel that he is my natural enemy!” Susie replied in all seriousness.

Your natural enemy? A dog-type nemesis? Audrey gave a reserved smile.

“Susie, don’t go into those woods for now.”

“Woof, Audrey, were you in a bad mood? I could tell from your piano music,” Susie asked.

Audrey nodded gently and said, “Yea... I just received word from Glaint that Fors and Xio wanted to inform me that this evening’s gathering has been canceled. I was originally planning to exchange some Beyonder ingredients for you.”

And also attempt to come into contact with people from the Psychology Alchemists... she added silently in her heart.

“Why?” Susie asked, puzzled.

Audrey thought for a moment before replying, “It’s said to be a result of the serial murders.”

...

On Saturday morning, Backlund’s air was as bad as usual.

Klein was trying to make a noodle dish which he loved to eat as a child. For this, he bought higher quality flour, added water and sugar, and mixed it to form a pot of thin “paste.”

Then, he poured oil into the pot and moistened the surface.

After the oil heated up, he scooped up some of the flour paste with his soup spoon and poured it to the side of the pot, spreading it thin.

Amidst the sizzling sounds, he spread out several flat pieces of bread, and the fragrance of the flour gradually emanated.

When he was almost done, he removed the soft flat pieces of bread, one by one, and put them on the plate. Then, he added water and turned the remaining materials into batter.

As soon as he returned to the dining room with the flat bread and “paste,” Klein impatiently tore off a piece and stuffed it into his mouth.

The flat piece of bread only had a rich fragrance of wheat and a sweet taste that whetted his appetite. It was simple and plain, but it was exceptionally delicious.

It's the taste from my memories... Klein quickly ate, occasionally drinking a mouthful of the paste.

As he was almost done eating and started to slow down, the doorbell suddenly rang.

A new commission? Klein took off his napkin, wiped his hands, and got up to go to the door.

Before he touched the handle, the image of a visitor appeared in his mind.

It was a middle-aged gentleman with white sideburns, a thin face, and an outstanding temperament.

It was the private detective, Isengard Stanton, who could get an invitation from the police!

Why is he here? Klein opened the door in puzzlement and asked with a smile, "Good morning, Mr. Stanton. Is there something?" Isengard took off his half top hat and smiled.

"Good morning, Mr. Moriarty. I wish to work with you. I believe you're an excellent detective. After all, you previously managed to lead your investigations all the way to East Balam Dock and the Dock Union all by yourself."

"Cooperate?" Klein didn't hide his surprise.

Isengard tapped his black cane and replied in a deep voice, "To find the serial killer behind the recent chain of serial murders.

"The police has already offered a reward of 2,000 pounds."

2,000 pounds? That's enough to drive all the bounty hunters and private detectives in Backlund crazy! This isn't like Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos who was out at sea for extended periods of time and had a bunch of subordinates. It's a bounty that can easily be touched if one reaches out...

Well, a pirate with combat prowess comparable to a Sequence 5 was worth 10,000 gold pounds, and a Sequence 6 murderer would have to be at the value of 3,000 to 4,000 pounds to be reasonable... Could it be that the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers have misjudged the serial killer to be a Sequence 7, rather than a quasiexpert who is about to advance to Sequence 5?

It's very possible that the ritual that The Sun mentioned is rather ancient. Perhaps after the Cataclysm, it has rarely appeared again, and the few great Churches and military don't have any information regarding this... There's an underlying problem. The Church of the Goddess, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, as well as the Augustus royal family was said to have risen from the Cataclysm. It's reasonable if they aren't aware of the past, but the Church of Storms have always insisted that they are one of the oldest... Could it be that their age is referring to a period of time after the devils retreated back into the Abyss?

After hearing Isengard Stanton's words, the first thing that flashed across Klein's mind was to assess the amount of the bounty, and then he allowed his mind to wander and made many connections.

"What's your opinion?" Isengard noticed that Sherlock Moriarty seemed distracted and pressed him.

My opinion? Klein was momentarily stumped.

A normal private detective would've definitely agreed, both because of the bounty and because of the well-known detective in front of him. A friendship with Isengard would provide him with great benefits in the detective circles.

The problem, however, was that Klein wasn't a normal private detective. He was worried that he would run into the Nighthawks who were in charge of the investigation.

Although I now have a beard, glasses, and a change in hairstyle, and the few Nighthawks who have seen me only a few times wouldn't recognize me, what if it was Madam Daly? However, it also isn't right to turn down the request as that wouldn't make sense. It would appear bizarre and suspicious... Furthermore, I do hope to catch that Devil as soon as possible. Otherwise, I don't know how many innocent girls will be killed... Klein hesitated for a few seconds, then he smiled.

"I've recently taken on a very troublesome case. I'm afraid I don't have much spare time."

Before Isengard Stanton could speak up, he added, "I can participate in the discussion and help to look through the information and analyze the clues, but I don't think I'll make any specific investigations."

I'll do a divination later. If there's a problem, I'll also hold back from sharing my opinion and purely be a spectator... As he spoke, Klein quickly formulated a plan.

Holding the black cane in his hand, Isengard pondered for a moment and said, "No problem.

"I've gathered more than a dozen detectives and have enough people to perform the investigation. What I admire the most about you is your excellent reasoning and analytical skills. Without as many resources as me, you actually managed to go all the way to the East Balam Dock and went to the Dock Union.

"If we do capture the criminal and receive the bounty, I'll distribute the rewards according to everyone's contribution in a reasonable manner. Trust me, I have some credibility in this business."

"Alright, I hope for a pleasant partnership." Klein reached out with his right hand and shook it, feeling the dry warmth of Isengard's palm.

It wasn't easy for a middle-aged gentleman in his forties or fifties to maintain such a warmth in Backlund's late autumn. This added to Klein's suspicions that Isengard was a Beyonder.

“Likewise.” Isengard smiled and nodded.

At that moment, Klein realized that he was being somewhat impolite, so he smiled and said, “Sorry, I forgot to invite you in, let’s talk about this over coffee and tea?”

“Thank you for the offer. I’ve already arranged for the detectives to come to my house at nine in the morning to discuss the case. My assistant is waiting for them there.” Isengard took out a marvel of mechanical beauty—a silver pocket watch with complicated engravings—opened it, and he said, “We need to head over there to meet them. Will that be a problem?”

“Not at all. Let me use the bathroom first and have a change of clothes.” At this moment, Klein suddenly rediscovered the feeling of being a Nighthawk again—striking evil down, maintaining order, and protecting the people.

In the bathroom, Klein went above the gray fog and received an acceptable answer through divination. He quickly returned to the real world, put on his coat and hat, took his cane, and followed Isengard into a rental carriage where he sat beside him.

Isengard looked at him and asked while seemingly in thought, “I’m very curious about how you managed to discover that Siber’s death was related to the Dock Union at East Balam Docks?”

I didn’t discover it... It’s a misunderstanding... Klein considered the question seriously to fabricate a lie.

With a smile on his face, he answered vaguely, “The crux of the investigation was to first determine that Siber’s death was done by a copycat. This point was all thanks Reporter Mike Joseph. After confirming this, using the clues about Siber’s route from Golden Rose, together with other clues, I had a matching guess, so I disguised myself as a reporter to perform the investigations.”

Isengard nodded slightly, and without wasting any more time on the subject, he went on to give a more detailed account of the serial murders than the newspaper had described, especially the latest case.

Time flew by as the discussion and exchange progressed. The carriage arrived at a slightly old building in the Hillston Borough.

The house's lighting wasn't very good. Even though there wasn't much fog in Backlund today, it remained rather gloomy. Isengard Stanton led Klein through the spacious living room and into the activity room where the fireplace had been lit.

Klein looked around and saw about sixteen detectives, who had filled every available seat in the activity room.

"Sherlock?" A surprised voice sounded; it seemed to be very familiar with Klein.

Who is it? Klein looked over in surprise and realized that Detective Stuart, who he had just bade farewell yesterday, was actually here.

He carefully looked around and recognized Detective Kaslana, who had been protecting Adol, and her assistant, Lydia.

"What a coincidence." The corners of Klein's mouth curled up into a smile as he approached Stuart.

Stuart squeezed to the side, vacating half of his seat, and said with a pat:

"Maybe it's not a coincidence. I've read about it in a magazine before. There's a psychological phenomenon called synchronicity. Just thinking about it can make it happen. Haha, that's a joke."

At this point, Isengard introduced Klein to the detectives present, "This is Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, an excellent detective."

With his endorsement, Kaslana and the others looked at Klein with much more trust than before, believing him to be an outstanding private detective.

Klein nodded in response, sat down next to Stuart, and casually asked, "Is your commission over?"

"Yes, Adol's situation has improved, and something seemed to happen to that 'bad company' of his, and they're unable to threaten him any further, so we lost our jobs." Stuart laughed and said, "I was planning to rest for a few days, but Mr. Stanton summoned me, so I came to take

a look. Actually, this is also good, as I really don't like to take on strange, scary cases. Oh, scary as in those with paranormal elements. Compared to those, I'm more willing to take on murder cases!"

After an assistant had poured each of them a cup of coffee or tea and distributed the information, Isengard sat down in a reclining chair, took out his pipe, and slowly rubbed it.

"I don't think any of you would be unfamiliar with this recent chain of serial murders. Do you have any thoughts on this case? Speak out so that we can engage in a discussion over it."

Stuart, whose face was thin and had a tiny mustache, raised his hand and spoke first.

"I just read through the information and discovered that the police didn't start investigating the case based on the identity of the victim.

"I don't think the criminal could've figured out with his eyes if the victim was once a street girl. He must've had contact with them. This is such an important clue, but the police actually missed it! God, this is unbelievable!"

That criminal most likely recognized the victim with the naked eye... Klein muttered to himself.

The majority of the private detectives echoed Stuart's doubts. Only Kaslana, Isengard, and a few others remained silent.

"This is a very important direction. Stuart, get a few friends to continue this line of investigation." When the discussion subsided, Isengard calmly gave a comment.

In the time that followed, the detectives argued, raised their voice to retort, stood up at times in order to pace around to collect their thoughts. During this whole time, Klein listened without comment.

When the exchange was almost over, he suddenly raised his hand and said, "I want information on the unsolved serial murders in the last twenty years spanning across Backlund and even the entire kingdom."

The room suddenly fell silent for a few seconds, and most of the private detectives were momentarily unable to understand Klein's intentions and thoughts.

Isengard put his pipe to his nose, inhaled its scent, and said thoughtfully, "You think that this isn't the murderer's first series of crimes?

"You suspect him of having committed similar crimes before, even if the modus operandi is different?"

It isn't a suspicion, but almost a certainty... Klein replied in his heart.

This was his reasoning based on the information provided by The Sun.

Since the killer was working hard to advance from Sequence 6 to Sequence 5, what did he do at Sequence 7 as a serial killer?

If he hadn't committed similar crimes, it would've been difficult for him to digest the potion. Even with the accumulation of time, where there was a significant chance of losing control when advancing from Sequence 7 to Sequence 6. Furthermore, there was a high risk for Beyonders in the Abyss pathway to lose control.

Hence, Klein decided, that regardless of whether the murderer knew the "acting method," he must've done serial murders during his time as a Sequence 7 for various reasons.

This way, even if the process of digesting the Sequence 7 potion wouldn't take years to complete, together with Sequence 6, twenty years would be quite a reasonable limit. After all, if one was too old, regardless of whether one had digested the potion or not, advancing to the next Sequence would've been too dangerous. As the ritual progressed, the person would become increasingly insane, leaving behind obvious clues.

At the current stage, the murderer is calm and has the ability to interfere with divination and tracking. There were almost no loopholes, but he might not have been the same during his early days of inexperience!

When he first completed a serial murder case, there was a high chance that he wasn't that cautious!

This was the follow up which would provide the best clues!

Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, but he nodded and replied, "That criminal's modus operandi doesn't make him seem like a rookie.

"I have reason to believe that he has done such cases before!

"By combining the past and the present, we're more likely to grasp the crux of the problem."

Hearing his answer, the detectives whispered to each other in discussion. After a brief silence from Isengard, he sincerely praised, "A brilliant idea!"

In the evening, Klein sat down on a reclining chair in his activity room. Warmed by the fireplace, he picked up the information that Isengard's assistant had just delivered.

As soon as his idea received praise from the great detective in the morning, Kaslana immediately claimed that she needed the same piece of information. Stuart had murmured that he had believed Klein was an excellent detective, given his calmness and composure when he faced Adol's case, but he hadn't expected him to be that outstanding.

At the same time, he told Klein that if he needed help, he could find him. He knew a lot of people in the detective circles in Backlund.

Isengard Stanton also promised to immediately contact the police and try to provide the corresponding information to the detectives who needed it before nightfall.

He truly was very trustworthy.

At the next Tarot Club, I'll have to ask Little Sun through The World about the characteristics of Sequence 6 Devil and what powers the Beyonders of this Sequence possess... I didn't plan on involving myself previously, so I had forgotten to gather the corresponding amount of information. However, since I've decided to help, it's best to be prepared. At the very least, I would know what's happening when danger rears its head... Klein thought for a few seconds, then he lowered his head and, under the light of the gas lamp, began to look through the unsolved serial murders in the last twenty years of the Loen Kingdom.

There were fewer than he had expected.

There were a total of four in Backlund, five in the other cities, a total of nine in total!

Yeah, although this world doesn't have the concept of DNA yet and lacks many necessary detective skills, with the impetus of the Emperor, there's already a rudimentary form of fingerprint investigations. Furthermore, there's mediumship, divination, dream entry, and other Beyonder methods! The police usually wouldn't seek out Beyonder

teams from the three major Churches for individual murder cases that don't involve the nobles, the rich, or officials. However, a serial killer has very negative repercussions. It easily causes panic, so they'll definitely make the wisest choice... This way, having only a few unsolved serial murders in the past twenty years is reasonable and logical. Klein quickly understood the reason.

He gathered his thoughts and began flipping through the cases, one after another.

In the absence of sufficient information to perform a divination, he had initially selected two serial killings that might be related to the current incident and intended to use them as an initial starting point.

One case occurred four years ago. There were five victims, all single prostitutes with a child. They had been mistreated before they died but lacked any evidence of sexual intercourse.

The police in charge of the case at the time thought that the murderer must've known the whores, or else it would've been impossible to precisely select individuals with a child. They had identified the suspects from the people who lived nearby and from the regular customers of several of the whores, but in the end, they failed to find the real murderer.

Although the dossier only made a brief note, Klein could clearly tell that they had asked for the help of Beyonders from the three major Churches. Unfortunately, they were still unable to crack the case.

With the Beyonder powers of the "Abyss," being able to tell signs that a woman had once been a degenerate doesn't go against the law of mysticism. Likewise for recognizing an individual as a prostitute, but it doesn't make sense that they would know that the woman was single with only one child... The police were right. What was the problem? The real murderer was like me, able to resist dreams, divination, mediumship, and evade the investigations from Mid-Sequence Nighthawk and Mandated Punisher Beyonders?

It's possible. Although the Church doesn't lack knowledge about the "serial killer," the murderer might have had some fortuitous encounters! Klein picked out some problems from his own standpoint.

I'm analyzing them by being part of "their kind"... I really didn't fail to live up to the name of Moriarty... He gave a selfdeprecating comment and decided that the first target would still be the four from Backlund.

Yes, I'll get Mr. Stanton to confirm the suspects' current address and condition through the police, and I'll ask Stuart to get others to help. That way, I wouldn't appear directly, so as to avoid encountering any official Beyonders. After the situation has been clarified, I can gather the suspects' belongings and move them above the gray fog to make mystical deductions. Klein quickly worked out a plan.

The second case had taken place eleven years ago. Four cases of dismembered corpses had happened in succession. Originally, these cases were considered as isolated cases until the police began having suspicions over the way the bodies were handled.

Only then was it confirmed that it was a case of serial murders. The victims were men and women who had worked till late at night before they returned home. They weren't robbed, and there had been no common connection between them.

Due to the delay—time which was very valuable when the crime was first committed—the case failed to produce any clues pointing to a suspect.

This is a problem caused by mishandling the case. If they had quickly received the help of a Spirit Medium, the wraith of the deceased might even gather around the murderer... Of course, it's also possible that the wraith can be "killed" by the murderer, just like this case... There's probably only ashes of those victims left. It will be hard to do any investigations through them... Klein rubbed his temples, and when he saw that it was evening, he stopped considering the case and got up from his reclining chair to leave Minsk Street.

He had something to do that night!

He wanted to go to the area south of the bridge, to the Harvest Church on Rose Street, to find Bishop Utravsky in a bid to obtain the Apothecary formula. He had already divined to see if it was dangerous or not.

To Klein, having an Apothecary as a subordinate was extremely helpful.

He could get injured or fall sick. He could encounter enemies who could harm him, and an Apothecary who he could find at any moment would be someone he could rely on.

After making a detour to East Borough, Klein disguised himself and took the steam metro to cross the Tussock River and arrived at the district south of the bridge.

Along the way, the darkness along the metro line and the corresponding gas lamps formed an unforgettable scene.

While on the public carriage, Klein came to Rose Street and found the tiny Harvest Church which was easily recognizable.

The golden cathedral had a more striking steeple and a Sacred Emblem of Life engraved on its outer wall. It was a baby surrounded by the symbols of wheat, flowers, and spring water. It stood out from the surrounding buildings.

At that moment, the cathedral's lights were dim, and there wasn't a single devotee inside.

Klein sneaked in from the side, carefully dabbing his face with paint rather than relying solely on his ability to create illusions.

In the hall of the cathedral, rows of pews were arranged neatly. Right at the top, at the front, there was a large Sacred Emblem of Life. Candles were lit on both sides of it.

A tall man in his forties or fifties wearing a brown clergyman's attire sat in the front pew.

Just by sitting there, he was like a small mountain, giving off an extremely oppressive feeling.

The man wore a bishop's bonnet, and his eyebrows were light and thin. There were obvious wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, his cheeks, and the corners of his mouth. He had his eyes closed tightly, his hands clasped as he pressed them to his chin, as if in the most pious of confessions.

Suddenly, he opened his eyes, revealing a patch of light blueness.

“The Mother’s Church will not reject anyone. Why didn’t you take the main entrance?” The forty to fifty-year-old man didn’t raise his head as he spoke in a low and gentle voice.

“Are you Bishop Utravsky?” Klein walked out of the shadows.

The tall man in the brown bishop’s attire replied gently, “I prefer to be called a Father. Father Utravsky.”

“Alright, My Lord.” Klein deliberately laughed. “Your name and your height tell me that you’re from Feysac. Why do you believe in Earth Mother?”

Bishop Utravsky raised his head slightly and stared at the Sacred Emblem of Life ahead of him and said with emotion, “I was born along the coasts of Midseashire, Indaw. I was a man who was passionate about combat and killing.”

Indaw? He really is from the Feysac Empire... Klein nodded indiscernibly.

Midseashire was the natural border between Loen, Intis, and Feysac. The east coast belonged to Loen, most of the west coast belonged to Intis; and to the north were the famous port cities of the Feysac Empire, such as Indaw.

In addition, the Midseashire spread to the northeast, penetrating through the Feysac Empire’s territory and connecting with the North Sea. There were many islands in that part of the sea that were the habitats for polar bears and sea lions.

Hunting polar bears and sea lions were a traditional festival for the citizens of Feysac.

Just as his thoughts began to wander a little, Bishop Utravsky continued looking forward and said, “I committed a serious crime and fled to the Sonia Sea where I became a ruthless pirate.

“I was lucky enough to meet a missionary of Earth Mother before I fell into the true hell of the soul.

“After that day, I understood the value of life, understood the charms of all living things, and gained the joy that stems purely from life itself. I swore in front of the Earth Mother’s Sacred Emblem that I would spread her faith in other countries to make up for my bloody past.

“Thus, here I am. I came here.”

Amidst his calm and emotional voice, Bishop Utravsky stood up. He was over 2.2 meters tall, and his build was sturdy. His robes were tight, and he looked like a giant from the legends who reappeared on the Northern Continent.

A real giant is three to five meters tall, with a single vertical eye... The citizens of the Feysac Empire are generally tall... It’s no wonder that they’ve always claimed to be the remnants of giants, believing that they have the blood of giants... Klein had to raise his neck to look at the priest’s face.

“What are you doing here?” Bishop Utravsky asked with his head lowered.

“I heard you have a request and that the reward is the Apothecary formula?” Klein, who had donned a disguise, went straight to the point.

Bishop Utravsky fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “Yes.

“Although I’m not sure where you learned of this, it’s true.” “Then, what task is it?” Klein asked with a smile.

Utravsky sized him up seriously for a while before saying, “I don’t think you can fulfill my request.”

“Perhaps I can? I need to know the details before I can make an evaluation.” Klein frowned.

Utravsky stood there like a giant pillar. After a few seconds, he said, “My request is...”

At this point, he closed his eyes and said, “Kill me.”

Kill you? It was the first time Klein had heard of such a request, and for a moment, he didn't know how to respond to such a task.

He even started to suspect if there was a conspiracy.

Bishop Utravsky opened his eyes and looked down at Klein.

"Kill the old me."

...Father, can you not have such long pauses when you're speaking... Klein's mouth twitched as he asked in puzzlement, "Even in the legends and myths, no one can return to the past. I'm afraid this task of yours can only be accomplished by the seven gods."

"No, I mean, killing the past me which has never died as it resides in the depths of my heart." Seeing that Klein was still confused, the slightly hunchbacked bishop said, "The former me, who used to love to kill and fight, didn't completely die just because of my contrition. I can clearly sense that he's still living inside my body, always wanting to regain control of everything, and I'm constantly suppressing him, hoping that he will be redeemed through mass, ascetic cultivation, and preaching, making him truly believe in the teachings of the Earth Mother and become one with me again."

Simply put, the imprints of the past are too deep, and they fiercely conflict with your current life, resulting in a split personality... The pseudo-psychologist and keyboard warrior, Klein Moretti, made a preliminary judgment and said in deliberation, "It's a psychological problem. I think what you need most is a

psychiatrist."

"I've attempted that before. Perhaps you aren't aware. There is a Doctor Sequence among the Beyonder pathway that the Church of Earth Mother controls, which is also known as Healing Pastor in ancient times. They've studied my problem and believe it's not as simple as a psychological ailment. It's also mixed with the inclination of losing control. If the past me defeats the present me, I will lose control without a doubt and become a monster," Utravsky said with a sigh.

Then what you need is the Spectator pathway's Sequence 7, Psychiatrist... Klein thought for a moment and said, "Your words make me believe that you've found a way to solve your problem, but you only lack a suitable executor, am I right?"

"Yes, all these years, besides preaching, I've also been searching for people and objects that can help me. In the end, with Earth Mother's blessings, I obtained a very mystical item. It is said to be a relic of an ancient dragon." Seeing that Klein wasn't scared away, Utravsky answered with some hope, "It allows the wielder to enter the deepest part of the target's soul, or, in other words, the bottom of the target's dreamland. There, a corresponding scene will be materialized. That way, you can see the past me directly, and then, through combat, eliminate him. In that special state, once he is truly dead, he will never appear again."

As expected of the mysterious world; there's actually such a method to treat someone with split personalities... Klein sighed with emotion and cautiously asked, "What restrictions are there, or what harm will it cause to the holder? Why do you think I'm incapable of completing this task?"

Bishop Utravsky looked down at Klein and said, "Once you use that mystical item, although the owner will remain conscious, there are many layers to the soul or dreamland. The past me will be able to make full use of this point to deceive you, or conversely, they can even kill you. And after a set period of time, yes—five minutes—that mystical item will make you completely lose consciousness, and your mind will never be able to return to your body and become its sacrifice.

"In this way, you will become a vegetable.

"In addition, as a result of the scene's materialization, if you're killed in the deepest part of your heart—or to put it in another way, the lowest level of the dreamland—similar side effects will occur. It's equivalent to true death.

"Believe me, the past me is much stronger than you think."

So that's how it is... However, this issue isn't a problem at all for me. I'm someone who can stay awake and rational during spirit channeling

and dreams. Even if that mystical item wants to make me lose myself completely, there's no need to worry too much. As long as there's room for struggle, I can take four steps counterclockwise and chant my honorific name, and directly head above the gray fog... The problem is, how strong is the past Bishop Utravsky, and what are my chances of defeating him? What restrictions or taboos are there in fighting in a materialized spiritual world? Klein thought for a while and said, "How strong were you, Father Utravsky? I don't think I would definitely lose." Bishop Utravsky's eyes turned adrift for a moment.

"I was a warrior.

"I have already reached Sequence 6 of my Beyonder pathway, becoming a Dawn Paladin."

So he's not a Beyonder of the Planter pathway... He himself said that he had committed a crime and become a pirate before being converted by the Church of Earth Mother... Sequence 6. Yes, it's not like I can't win. A Magician is the kind of Beyonder that's much stronger if they make preparations in advance. Also, due to my uniqueness, the deepest part of my heart, or the lowest level of my dreamland, can be considered as my home ground... Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "Will that mystical item weaken him?"

"Yes, but it's still his main region of activity, so the weakening wouldn't be too great. At most, it would be like he had already fought an intense battle." Utravsky recalled his previous attempts.

That just raises my chances... Klein continued, "Is there anything I need to pay attention to in that special environment?"

"Just like real combat, effective attacks are always effective, illusions will remain illusions, but one thing must be noted, he can bring you into a few other levels of the dreamland at any time, creating a situation where it's hard to determine whether it's reality or an illusion." Bishop Utravsky emphasized, "So, you have to be at least at Sequence 6, or some other special Sequence 7 to be able to complete this mission, and the risk is nothing trivial. Heh, if I didn't swear on a Holy Artifact of Earth Mother that I wouldn't ask the Church for help before my missionary succeeds, things wouldn't have been so difficult."

So that's how it is... I'm not afraid of a dream... The corner of Klein's mouth curled up.

"Final question. Are there any points to take note of when fighting a Dawn Paladin?"

Bishop Utravsky frowned his wrinkled face and said with a sigh, "This is something that requires absolute secrecy for Beyonders.

"However, as long as you participate in enough battles, others would often be able to conclude certain traits. Besides, the more details you know, the higher the chances of success are, right?" "Yes," Klein answered frankly with a nod.

In a reminiscent tone, Bishop Utravsky said, "A Dawn Paladin possesses a power akin to that of a giant, enabling the area within a 40-50 meter radius to be basked in the light of dawn. Such light cannot only dispel illusions, but it also has the special ability to exorcize wraiths and specters, and it can even weaken evil spirits.

"They can conjure Dawn Armor around their bodies which would be equivalent to specially forged full-body armor that doesn't weigh anything or inhibit their motion in any way. If destroyed, recovery would require a certain amount of time.

"He can also conjure different weapons. The strongest weapon would be a two-handed great sword. It's often called the Sword of Dawn; it's sharp, solid, and each strike has a purification effect.

"Apart from that, Dawn Paladins have a type of Beyonder power to create a Hurricane of Light. It can directly destroy a person's body, eliminate wraiths, and damage evil spirits."

There aren't a lot of Beyonder powers, but they are my natural enemy. They have high offensive strength and defense, and they're not afraid of illusions. The only good news is that, other than for facing wraiths and specters, the mysteriousness of a Dawn Paladin is very low... Klein listened as he simulated a combat situation in his mind, searching for the most reliable way to deal with a Dawn Paladin.

The level of mysteriousness he was referring to implied strangeness, unpredictability, unfathomability, and incomprehensibility.

Bishop Utravsky looked at him quietly. He didn't press him or drive him away.

After gradually formulating a plan, Klein raised his head, looked over, and said, "Perhaps I can give it a try, but I will need to leave for a few minutes to confirm that you're not lying."

Bishop Utravsky replied with a slightly stunned voice, "No problem.

"However, I must remind you once again. Although I don't know where your confidence stems from, do not belittle the past me. He's extremely skilled in combat."

"I wouldn't joke with my life." Klein pressed his hand to his chest, bowed, and stepped out of the Harvest Church. He found a secluded spot and quickly went above the gray fog to make a divination.

After obtaining an answer that there was a certain danger but at tolerable levels, he immediately returned to the real world. From the beginning to the end, it only took him about ten to twenty seconds above the gray fog.

Following that, Klein returned to the Harvest Church and said to Bishop Utravsky, who stood in his original spot, "I'll take this commission."

Bishop Utravsky stared at him intently before slowly saying, "If you succeed, not only will I give you the Apothecary formula, but I will also gift you a mystical item without much of a negative side effect."

Klein was taken aback at first before he sincerely praised, "Father, you truly are a generous person!"

Bishop Utravsky didn't say another word. He took a strange candle from a concealed pocket in his brown clergyman's tunic.

The outer layer of the short candle seemed to be wrapped in a layer of human skin, but there were also several bumps on it.

Its wick was about the length of a finger segment and was entirely black in color. It was covered in tiny densely packed scale-like patterns.

“Ignite it with your spirituality.” Utravsky handed the tiny, strange candle to Klein.

Instead of following his instructions, Klein took out a matchbox, took out a few of them, and put them in his trouser pocket. He lit and blew out a few other matchsticks before throwing them at various corners of the cathedral. Then, he adjusted the positions of the paper figurines, paper notes, long strips of paper, Azik’s copper whistle, and various charms.

This was in preparation for the worst case scenario that he could imagine.

After all of this was done, Klein snapped his fingers, causing a blue-colored flame of spirituality to appear.

Sizzle!

He held the flame close to the top of the tiny candle and watched the black wick light up.

Nothing seemed to change, but Klein was acutely aware that he had entered the world of the mind.

Directly in front of him, he saw Bishop Utravsky still standing in his original spot. His sturdy body, which was more than 2.2 meters tall, gave off a sense of oppression.

The repentant bishop looked down at him, his facial muscles contorting. Following that, his expression became abnormally ferocious.

Soon after, Klein discovered that the surrounding light and shadows were rapidly transforming, and it felt like he was experiencing a real, intense battle.

Pa!

At the end of the battle, Bishop Utravsky fell heavily to the ground. His breathless body had blood flowing profusely.

Klein’s mouth twitched as he saw the scene before him with a clear mind. He silently evaluated.

What a professional performance.

But I know that this is a dream within a dream.

When Klein looked down again, he could no longer see the strange candle wrapped in human skin; instead, a faint, slightly sweet scent kept lingering around his nose.

Ignoring the Bishop Utravsky's body that was lying down in a pool of his own blood, he took out his matchbox and lit one matchstick.

The blood on the ground disappeared as soon as the spark was produced, and the messy church hall became tidy once again.

The gargantuan Utravsky slowly got up, looked down at Klein, and said with a twisted face, "It actually didn't have any effect...

"It's no wonder that you dared to accept this task.

"However, this is your misfortune. I didn't actually want to kill you."

As he spoke, the candlelight on both sides of the cathedral began to flicker visibly. The entire hall suddenly brightened, but it was mild and not blinding; it was as if the morning sun had just come in.

The invisible spirit quickly vanished, and Klein, without a word, threw the match, flexed his cheeks, and simulated a sound.

Bang!

An invisible Air Bullet shot out and struck Bishop Utravsky heavily in the chest, producing a resounding sound. However, the "giant" bishop had at some point equipped a set of silver armor that covered his entire body. It included gauntlets, breastplates, and a helmet.

At that moment, a spiderweb-like crack appeared on the silver "metal" at his chest, but it didn't completely shatter. It even began to slowly recover.

Bang! Bang!

Klein produced a series of sounds, creating two Air Bullets that followed one after the other, sending them towards the enemy's chest in a bid to completely destroy the enemy's defenses with a continuous barrage of attacks!

However, he saw that in Bishop Utravsky's hand was a heavy, wide great sword, looking as if it was condensed from light. Using it, he deftly blocked the two Air Bullets, producing two sounds which were almost impossible to distinguish.

Creak!

Utravsky took one step forward, and the cathedral seemed to shake. At the same time, his two-handed great sword swept down at Klein in a gesture that looked as if it was going to shatter the building.

Before the sword arrived, the wind that it carried with it almost caused Klein to lose his balance.

Such terrifying power! As this thought flashed through his mind, Klein deftly jumped to the side and bent over, ready to roll on the spot.

Bang!

The two-handed great sword in Utravsky's hands smashed into the ground, shattering the stone slabs and causing cracks to spread rapidly in all directions.

Screech! He dragged the great sword along the ground as he switched from a vertical slash to a horizontal sweep, causing sparks to fly.

This move was meant for opponents who loved to roll!

Just as Klein was about to hit the ground, the image of himself being struck by the two-handed great sword appeared in his mind. He quickly swung his arms and reached out with his palms. He lightly pressed and once again leaped into the air.

Woosh! The resulting wind blew across the dust on the ground, and the terrifying great sword flattened the nearby pews.

However, before Klein could counterattack, the "giant" bishop chained his attack without any pause.

One strike, two strikes, three strikes... five strikes, six strikes, seven strikes... Utravsky seemed to possess extremely robust stamina. His unceasing, storm-like attacks lasted for dozens of seconds.

He used the simplest of sword techniques—slashing vertically, slashing diagonally, sweeping horizontally, thrusting forward, and bashing forward—to demonstrate what was the most effective and reasonable way to deal the most damage. And the range of the two-handed great sword reached a terrifying extent.

Klein jumped, rolled, and ran. He didn't have the opportunity to use his powers and appeared rather pathetic. If it wasn't for the matches that he thrown ahead of time in different corners of the cathedral and how the candle on both sides of the altar had yet to be extinguished, allowing him to "flash," he probably would've been slain by his enemy.

As expected of a Beyonder job that's adept at combat... No mistakes, no weaknesses... Klein didn't panic because of this. Amidst his rolling and dodging, he constantly looked for any flaws that the enemy had, waiting for his attacks to reach a moderate stage.

Finally, he discovered a problem with Utravsky's sword techniques.

The two-handed great sword was too long and too large, and it had an obvious flaw in close combat!

With this thought flashing in his mind, Klein took advantage of the great sword's vertical slash to roll forward to the left, and then, with a push of his palm, he quickly rolled to the spot between Utravsky's legs.

As a "half-giant" who was over 2.2 meters tall, Utravsky would have his legs spread apart from simply standing. His silver crotch was clearly visible.

As soon as he rolled over, Klein's left hand reached into his pocket, pulled out a long piece of paper, and turned it into a sharp and hard cane. He then inserted it into the gap at the side of the enemy's crotch, stabbing into the body of the "giant" bishop!

This would be a fatal blow!

However, at this moment, his heart trembled. The image of a great sword stabbing down as boundless light, forming a terrifying storm, engulfed his entire body appeared in his mind.

A trap! Utravsky's trap! Klein didn't hesitate. He pressed his right hand down, jumped forward through the gap between the legs of the "giant" bishop's legs, and arrived behind him.

By the time he finished this set of motions, Utravsky was holding the hilt of his sword with both hands, bending his waist and lifting his sword up to thrust straight down into the stone slab in front of him.

With a cracking sound, rays of light surged out of the sword's body like the first rays of dawn. They turned into a hurricane and swept across the surroundings.

Without a sound, the stone slab disappeared from where Klein had been, and the earth beneath it became nearly ten centimeters thinner. The silver armor on his legs and crotch was also damaged, shattering inch by inch and revealing his skin.

His trap was to sustain damage in exchange for the death of his enemy.

At this moment, Klein, who had leaped behind Bishop Utravsky, finally found an opportunity to counterattack. He twisted his body midair, puffed out his cheeks, and simulated gunshot sounds at the back of his enemy's head.

Bang!

Bang!

Two Air Bullets hit the back of Utravsky's head in quick succession, shattering the silver metal in that area and then splitting it into pieces, exposing a completely unprotected area.

Klein was about to give him a fatal blow when Utravsky suddenly straightened up, twisted his waist, and violently swept the two-handed great sword backward.

The speed was so fast and the attack was so ferocious that Klein seemed unable to dodge it. However, he pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and placed it in front of his body.

Clang!

The collision between the sword and the piece of paper produced the sound of metal being struck. The crisp sound of metal striking metal filled the entire cathedral.

Klein was sent flying like a tennis ball. The paper in his hand was torn apart, leaving behind only a tiny piece in between his fingers.

In midair, he was immediately faced with the violent and swift pursuit of Utravsky. The situation was precarious.

However, he didn't panic in the slightest and only shook his wrist.

The tiny piece of paper flew up, and a spark rapidly expanded, completely enveloping Klein.

Hum! The great sword sliced through the ball of fire, but it didn't cause any damage, only creating a small spark.

At the candle on the right side of the cathedral, a faint yellow flame spread out, forming a figure whose face was painted with oil paint.

Klein reappeared and pulled out another long strip of paper from his pocket.

Pa!

With a flick of his wrist, the paper turned into a sturdy whip. The surface of the whip was even burning with scarlet flames.

Pa! Pa! Pa!

Klein lashed out at the "giant" bishop from a distance.

However, his weapon quickly disintegrated under the attacks of the two-handed great sword.

And that was precisely Klein's goal!

Pa! Pa! Pa! With a snap of his fingers, he sent streaks of fire flaring up from the ground, blocking Utravsky and burning his unprotected legs.

The Dawn Armor's recovery was rather slow!

As the tongues of fire leaped upwards, his legs were charred black and a crimson color was seeping up his legs.

However, this didn't affect the "giant" bishop's agility. He let out a low growl, and like a steam train that had finally accelerated to its highest speed, he charged through the flames and appeared in front of Klein.

This speed was unbelievably fast!

Soon after, the two-handed great sword in Utravsky's hands cracked, turning into spots of light that swept forth in all directions.

Almost instantly, Klein fell into a situation of certain death.

The matches he kept on him were ignited, and an intense flame engulfed him.

However, this wasn't as fast as the Hurricane of Light. Just as the scarlet red flame appeared, it was immediately engulfed!

Klein's body was torn asunder as it was reduced to shreds, but they ended up losing their thickness and turned into bits of paper.

Behind Utravsky, a column of scarlet red flames flared, and Klein stepped out.

He took out a matchbox from his other pocket and threw it at the enemy, as if to ignite all the remaining matches in one go and, through the restraints of the small space, create a reliable explosion.

The matchbox was aimed at Utravsky's lower body which no longer had any protection!

Klein raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

At the same time, Bishop Utravsky jumped up on his back, bent his knees, and withdrew his legs.

Pa!

Accompanied by the snap of his fingers was an unaffected matchbox, but a loud bang. It was an Air Bullet that accurately tore open the back of Bishop Utravsky's head which lacked any protection. It was lethal weapon that had been prepared in advance!

His skull split open, and blood and white bits spurted out. With great difficulty, Utravsky turned his head around and said in a daze, "You..."

The matchbox, that was riddled with holes caused by the Hurricane of Light, fell to the ground. However, it remained unignited.

Klein laughed and replied, “I’ve never said that snapping my fingers could only be used to control flames and not shoot out Air Bullets.

“Look.”

Pa! Pa! Pa!

He snapped his fingers repeatedly, allowing one Air Bullet after another to hit Utravsky in the head, shattering his helmet and cracking his head.

Bam!

Utravsky stopped breathing and fell heavily to the ground, shaking the cathedral hall slightly.

Pa!

Klein turned and snapped his fingers again.

The box of matches on the ground exploded, transforming into a scarlet flame that buried Utravsky’s gigantic body.

Klein didn’t attempt to sense the existence of the candle, but instead he relied on his own clarity of mind to force himself out of the lowest level of his mind.

Behind him, the corpse was wrapped in scarlet flames as the world around him disintegrated bit by bit.

The illusory feeling passed, and Klein saw the strange candle in his hand again, along with its black wick and palish-white flame.

The damage of the Dawn Paladin—the shattered ground, broken pews, and the sliced candles—had been restored to their prebattle state. It was hard to tell where they had been damaged.

At some point, Bishop Utravsky, who had been standing opposite him, had taken a seat in the front pew, his back bent forward and his head buried in his hands. His hands were pressed to his temples.

Drip!
Drip!

Sweat trickled down his face and spread out from his feet. The ground was already completely wet.

When he sensed that the strange candle had been extinguished by Klein, he shuddered and raised his head to meet Klein's eyes.

His slightly turbid eyes were filled with tears, and his wrinkled face was streaked with tears.

However, his eyes were filled with emotion, joy, and clarity.

If it was said that this "giant" bishop previously appeared tall and heavy, then all that was left of him now was the heaviness of his body but without the heaviness of his spirit.

At this moment, Klein felt like he was looking at a newborn baby.

Those tears were proof of new life.

The corners of Utravsky's mouth curled up slightly as he smiled kindly.

"You're much better than I expected."

"No, this is because I gained sufficient understanding in advance and made the appropriate preparations. As for the past you, not only were you unsure of your opponent's strengths, you were also greatly weakened. If I were to fight against you in the real world, I would be considering how to escape," Klein calmly replied.

A prepared Magician and an unprepared Magician are very different concepts... He added silently in his heart.

Bishop Utravsky didn't dwell on this problem. Brimming with relief from head to toe, he said, "Thank you, my friend.

"According to our agreement, I'll give you the Apothecary formula. I'll also give you an additional mystical item."

As he spoke, from his pocket, he took out what looked like a combination of a needle, a tube, and a container.

"You have two choices. This is one of the two choices you have. When I got it, I didn't know its name, and I never thought about naming it either. You're able to use it to draw out a tube of blood, your own blood. At a critical moment, you can transfuse it back into you. That way, your fatigue will disappear. Your ailments and injuries will be alleviated, and your strength, speed, balance, and other attributes will all be greatly enhanced." Bishop Utravsky pointed to the object in his hand.

"What about its limitations and latent dangers?" Klein asked rationally.

Utravsky looked at the mysterious patterns on the needle and tube and explained in detail, "After drawing out a tube of blood, you'll be weakened for a full twelve hours, and during those twelve hours, transfusing the blood back into you wouldn't have any effect. Of course, the specific time limit isn't that precise; it increases or decreases according to your body's condition. In addition, it's best not to use it too often; not more than once a week. Otherwise, not only will the transfusion bring you power, but it will also temporarily make you lose your rationality, and the short period when you have your blood drawn and turn weak will become your characteristic.

"In addition to these, it also has a problem. If you carry it around for more than half an hour, you'll become a little neurotic."

Fortunately, Bishop Utravsky didn't previously draw his blood. Otherwise, if the past him can transfuse his blood, my chances of winning would've been very, very low... This was the first thought that flashed through Klein's mind.

He frowned and was rather worried about the negative effects of the mystical item.

Regardless of whether it was a temporary loss of rationality, a twelve hour period of weakness, or a change in his mental state, these were all hidden dangers that didn't seem too problematic. But after seeing Rampagers and hearing the ravings of an evil god, Klein believed that a Beyonder's mental state was very important. If one's mental state remained at a nadir for an extended period of time, or if there were frequent anomalies, it would easily cause the phenomenon of losing control to happen. This was the same even if a Beyonder had grasped the acting method!

"What's the second choice?" Klein said after two seconds of silence.

Bishop Utravsky took out a simple brass key from his other pocket and smiled.

"This is called a Master Key. It can help you open any lock which doesn't contain mystical powers, as well as a small number of locks that are augmented with Beyonder effects. And in a place without any locks or doors, it can open a passageway that doesn't belong to reality. Heh heh, the premise is that there are no restrictions by Beyonder powers and the barriers aren't too thick.

"Its spirituality is completely restrained. When it's not being used, Beyonders cannot see any difference between it and a normal key."

Utravsky stood up again, leaving Klein no choice but to look up.

The "giant" bishop increased his pace and came to the wall at the side of the cathedral hall and pressed the Master Key against the brick.

He twisted gently, and his entire body seemed to sink into water as ripples were produced. He went through the wall and arrived outside.

In the same way, Bishop Utravsky returned to the cathedral hall and entered Klein's line of sight again.

"Have you decided on the mystical item?" the tall priest asked with his head lowered.

“Hmm, what are the latent dangers of the Master Key?” Klein asked after some deliberation.

Bishop Utravsky smiled warmly and said, “The person carrying it will occasionally get lost.

“According to what someone told me, one gets lost at random.”

Lost? I’m a Seer with spiritual intuition... Klein mumbled, and his mind gradually came to a decision.

After a few seconds, he said, “I want the Master Key.”

He didn’t want his mental state to be affected, and he didn’t want to accumulate the risk of losing control.

What a pity, what I want the most is that weird candle... It’s akin to the deepest part of a soul, the lowest level of a dreamland. That’s equivalent to my home ground... He sighed in his heart.

“Alright.” Bishop Utravsky handed the simple brass key to Klein and took back the strange candle wrapped in human skin.

While Klein was examining the mystical item, Utravsky pointed at the back and said, “The Apothecary formula is in that room. I’ll go get it. Wait here for a while.”

Klein nodded in response. Taking advantage of the moment when Bishop Utravsky’s figure disappeared from the hall, he took out a penny and divined if he had been lying about the Master Key.

After receiving an acceptable answer, he walked to the wall in front of him where a row of candles were placed and pressed the ancient brass key against the hard wall.

As he injected spirituality and turned the key, Klein’s vision suddenly blurred and then became clear.

At that moment, there were no longer burning candles filling his vision, nor were there neat pews and straight walls. There were only withered grass and muddy land strewn with a bit of garbage. To the side, it led out to where a gas street lamp stood.

I really came out. Klein smiled, nodded, turned, and once again using the Master Key to successfully return to the cathedral's hall.

After more than ten seconds of waiting, Utravsky walked in with heavy footsteps, a roll of yellowish-brown goatskin parchment in hand.

"You can get an appraisal for this. If there's a problem, you can always find me at the Harvest Church. The "giant" bishop handed the Apothecary formula to Klein.

Main ingredients: Horn of an adult Flying Unicorn, 3 grams of a Royal Jellyfish's venom crystal... Klein swept his gaze, smiled and replied, "I will confirm its authenticity."

For example, divine it above the gray fog... He added inwardly.

Bishop Utravsky nodded slightly, and without another word, he turned around and walked to the Earth Mother's Sacred Emblem of Life.

He spread his arms wide and chanted in a low voice, "Thank you, Source of Life!

"Praise you, Mother of All Things!"

...

Klein put away the Master Key and the Apothecary formula. After Utravsky stopped, he said half-jokingly, "Could it be that my visit was arranged by Earth Mother?"

Why else would you be thanking Her for? The false believer of the Evernight Goddess, Klein, chuckled inwardly.

"Yes, everything is arranged by Earth Mother. Otherwise, my request for help wouldn't have reached your ears. I wouldn't be here in Backlund either. Nor would I have obtained this Mental Terror Candle," Backlund Utravsky said with a gentle smile without any signs of anger.

Complete and self-consistent believer logic, but... Klein suddenly felt that it was impossible to communicate with him. He pressed his hand to his chest, bowed, and said, "Thank you for your generosity. I should leave now."

He straightened his body and quickly retreated. He then rapidly disappeared from the main hall of the cathedral and from Rose Street.

Ten minutes later, he saw the golden façade of the Harvest Church from another direction, and he couldn't help but twitch his mouth.

I can't go back without divination? he silently muttered to himself. He really wanted to stubbornly rely on his own ability to overcome the fact that he was lost.

But his hand, which was faster than his voice, had broken the branches of a tree and made a makeshift dowsing rod.

Dowsing Rod Seeking could be used to seek people, as well as items and directions!

This time, Klein was able to return home without incident, and he even confirmed the authenticity of the formula and the latent dangers of the Master Key.

...

The next morning was a Sunday morning.

After waking up, Klein ate breakfast, took out a pen and paper, and wrote a letter to Isengard Stanton, asking him to seek help from the police to confirm the current status of the few suspects for the serial murder case from four years ago. Back then, the targets were single prostitutes with a child.

After folding the letter and stuffing it in an envelope, Klein put on a black stamp which was one penny in denomination. Putting on his clothes, he took his hat and cane, and he walked out of his house to post the letter at the mailbox at the end of the street.

Then, he saw Mrs. Stelyn Sammer and her husband, Mr. Luke dressed to the nines.

A rental carriage was stopped by their door.

"Good morning. Why are you attending a banquet so early in the morning?" Klein asked with some surprise.

Luke chuckled and said, “It’s not really a banquet. It’s more like us helping out.”

Mrs. Stelyn raised her chin slightly and added, “Mary has successfully entered the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. There will be a grand ball tonight, and we have to help out in advance.”

Mrs. Mary’s wish has been fulfilled? Impressive... Klein sighed and said with a smile, “Please pass on my congratulations to Mrs. Mary for me.”

Luke Sammer nodded and said, “You haven’t read this morning’s paper, have you? All the members of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council have been published.

“The Chairman of the council is Sir Ders Shaw and the First

Secretary is Mr. Hibbert Hall.”

Sir Ders Shaw? Mr. Hibbert Hall? Who are they? I don't know them at all... Acting as though he had no doubts, Klein said halfjokingly, "Let's hope that they can bring blue skies and sunshine to Backlund."

"Yes, although burning in your own fireplace is everyone's freedom and is a right granted by the law, blue skies and sunshine are more desirable things." Luke Sammer, a member of the Soot Reduction Association, sighed with emotion and pointed to the hired carriage. "We should go. Mary urgently needs some help."

Stelyn Sammer added, feigning a level of restraint, "There might be Members of Parliament coming to the banquet, from the Backlund district or from the kingdom."

"I can imagine the grandeur of this banquet." Klein flattered politely and watched the Sammers board the carriage and leave.

As he turned to head for the post office at the end of the street, a postman in a dark green uniform arrived in a carriage and delivered a letter to his letterbox.

A letter for me? Klein pulled out a bunch of keys and casually chose the one that was simple and had a brass color.

Kacha!

The Master Key easily opened the letterbox.

I just need to have this key on me in the future... Klein mumbled as he took out the newspapers he had subscribed to and the letter.

The letter was from Isengard Stanton.

He had also looked through the old and unresolved serial murders yesterday and had picked out the most suspicious ones, and after obtaining a preliminary confirmation from the police department about the present circumstances of the suspects, he had written to Klein, Kaslana, and the other private detectives, that were interested in this angle, to share his findings.

It included the two cases that Klein had focused on.

Great detective minds think alike... The letter I wrote just now was for nothing... Klein joked before returning to the living room.

According to Isengard, the random murder cases of people who returned late had resulted in a large number of suspects, but the suspect had never been narrowed down. After so many years, it was very difficult, almost hopeless, to try to find a new clue.

One of the four suspects in the other case was a teenager whose mother was also a victim—a prostitute and single mother who had him as her only child. He had been abused by his mother, had been the police's first suspect, but less than half a year after that case, he had been seriously injured in a gang firefight in East Borough and died in a surgical room at a charity hospital.

His body was cremated with people bearing witness before being buried in the cemetery.

As such, it was impossible for him to be connected to the current serial killer.

If he hadn't been cremated, I definitely would've dug up the grave to verify it... Klein, who had once come back from the dead, seriously considered the possibility of the other party coming back from the dead.

Of the remaining three suspects, one had moved several times in the past few years. The police had lost track of his situation and needed more time to find him. One had gone through bankruptcy and moved to East Borough from North Borough, while the other was still running a grocery store on the same street.

Klein took out a fresh sheet of paper, described the situation, and then asked the recipient to observe the two suspects with specific addresses in secret. He emphasized, "The killers of serial murders are all cruel, brutal, and very aggressive. Please be careful not to get too close to them; act as if you're just an ordinary neighbor observing them.

"The information I need pertains to their recent mental state, such as whether they are irritable, whether they like to shut themselves in their

rooms, rarely communicate with others, and whether they have beaten others up."

This was also the information he got from The Sun. After each kill, the Devil would eat the victim's organs according to the ritual and stay in a bloodthirsty, manic state until a new victim appeared.

After emphasizing the need to take note of the investigator's safety, Klein folded the letter, stuffed it into a new envelope, and affixed a black stamp to the surface.

Then he wrote down the name of the recipient: "Detective

Stuart."

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Susie was lying in the corner of the study, looking around as if bored.

With a bulging stomach, Earl Hall took a puff with his pipe and said to his eldest son, "Do you know why I insisted on having you be on the National Atmospheric Pollution Council?"

Hibbert Hall replied thoughtfully, "You wish to influence the formulation of the relevant laws and policies?"

"No, although I'm the second-largest shareholder of the Constant Coal and Steel Consortium, I don't really care about this problem. I've been urging them to make adjustments accordingly. I have no doubt that fixing atmospheric pollution is a future trend.

"Hibbert, although our family has fixed seats in the House of Lords, and you will also become a Member of Parliament of the House of Lords in time, so why do some nobles have more influence than others when they are all Members of Parliament of the House of Lords? Notwithstanding the Speaker and other people with special statuses."

Hibbert thought for a moment before saying, "The title of nobility, wealth, commercial status, as well as the relationship between the government and the army?"

“That is only a part of it. In addition to one’s own ability to handle matters, people will always rely on those with rich experience, and those who have participated in many similar matters. In the future, if you wish to have any achievement in politics, in addition to inheriting a seat, you will also need to try your best at participating in various matters and display the corresponding capabilities. Gradually, your activity will catch the eye of the various Members of Parliament. They will slowly find you trustworthy and that will be the source of your influence.

“Look at the current situation of the nobles in the Intis Republic, Hibbert. You should understand that with the passage of time and the development of society, the obvious privileges will be weakened, and one’s title will become less and less important. It’s just a title of honor, and the position and influence of the business world is what you should pay attention to,” Earl Hall explained in detail.

“What if you encounter something you aren’t good at?” Hibbert muttered to himself.

“Then pretend that you can handle it. Don’t worry about wasting money; form professional teams, listen to their opinions, and make decisions. Everyone has a lot of areas that they aren’t good at, and only money is multi-faceted.” Earl Hall gave words of advice.

Hibbert replied in enlightenment, “I see, Father.”

At this moment, Susie, who was by the side, yawned in boredom.

When it was all over, she slipped into Audrey’s art studio, repeated everything she had heard, and finally muttered, “I have no idea what they were talking about.”

Audrey listened to her thoughtfully, then she said with a faint smile, “They were discussing a good thing that involves reducing the pungent smell you smell.”

“Is that so?” Susie asked without fully comprehending it.

Audrey didn’t answer and thought of something else.

She had intended to quietly draw attention to the bad conditions of East Borough, the factory area, and the dock area, but in the last two social gatherings, she had found herself unable to find an opportunity.

Those nobles, those Members of Parliament, and senior civil servants would never even talk about such matters. There was no way to steer them towards that topic even if she wanted to!

...

On Monday afternoon, Klein returned to 15 Minsk Street from the Quelaag Club.

As Stuart had yet to provide any results from his preliminary investigation, and since he was temporarily unable to find a suitable candidate to become an Apothecary, Klein had nothing to do yesterday and today. Therefore, he simply went to the Quelaag Club to practice his shooting, read, and get some free food.

In the process, he got to know many other members of the club.

This is the lifeblood for future business opportunities... Klein sighed with emotion, took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

He went about his preparations, step by step, first conjuring the fake World, familiarizing himself with the control of the AllBlack Eye, and then sent a message to The Sun that the Tarot Gathering was about to begin.

After all of this was done, Klein waited for three o'clock to arrive. Then, he reached out to touch the corresponding crimson stars and established a firm connection. The Magician had her own illusory star as well.

Under the pretext of concentrating on her writing, Fors Wall sent Xio away, and for a moment she was dazzled by the sudden rush of gray fog.

In the blink of an eye, she found herself above the mysterious and serene gray fog. She was inside a majestic palace, and in front of her was an ancient, mottled bronze table. Surrounding the table were one blurry figure after another.

One figure after another? One figure after another! Are these the gathering members Mr. Fool spoke of? Fors felt that the members of this secret gathering were all very, very powerful Beyonders.

Except for me... she thought, without confidence and full of fear.

However, looking at it from another perspective, since I can join this gathering as a Sequence 9, the other members might not necessarily be very strong. The requirement for this gathering is obviously not about strength, but for some other reason, a member must manage to establish a connection with Mr. Fool... Fors quickly rejected her first judgment and relaxed a little.

At the same time, Audrey also discovered that there was a new person at today's gathering.

It's a woman... Is it Xio or Fors? Has she passed the examination? Or is it someone else? Audrey nearly forgot to greet Mr. Fool in her bid to take a closer look at the features of the new member.

No matter how blurry the figure was, she could still see her hair color, silhouette, her accent, and verbal tics!

Hmm... I must also take note. At the very beginning, Mr. Hanged Man had managed to identify me as a noble from my special pronunciation of certain words, and from my habit of using certain special words... Audrey stood up, lifted her skirt, and said to Klein at the end of the long bronze table, "Good afternoon, Mr. Fool."

After the greeting, she didn't conceal her curiosity. She looked at the new member who was seated at the same row as her and asked with a smile, "This is?"

Chapter 311: Observing Each Other

Klein sat in the seat belonging to The Fool and looked around.

"This is Miss Magician, our new member."

Then, he looked at Fors and introduced the rest to her.

"This is Miss Justice, and that is Mr. Hanged Man..."

As Fors nodded her head as a form of greeting the members with the corresponding code names, she observed the other members.

Miss Justice is blonde and seems very young; she sits with a graceful posture. Mr. Hanged Man has dark blue hair, as messy as seaweeds; he doesn't have a very bulky figure; he doesn't like to talk, but when observed by him, it gives me a sense of unease; he must be a leader of some faction... Mr. Sun looks like a teenager; he's very silent and reserved; other than that, I can't tell anything else—maybe he's just as weak as me. Mr. World's eyes are very cold and quite gloomy; it's obvious that he isn't someone to be trifled with... As a writer who had written a best-selling novel, she showcased her unique traits.

While she looked at the other members, they were also looking at her. Among them, Justice Audrey was the most attentive.

From her figure, I can eliminate Miss Xio. Brown hair and slightly curled. Is she Madam Fors? Temporarily, I can't rule out the possibility that Mr. Fool has pulled in someone else. Hmm, her pronunciation and the way her mouth moves is the same as her Backlund accent. Her aura and emotional colors match as well...

It's unlikely that Mr. Fool will specially create a fake image for the members, right? There's no need for "Him" to hide anything... After a few seconds of sizing Fors up, Audrey had nearly superimposed the blurry figure with her impression of Fors.

If I can find another trait in other areas, I can almost be certain... She waited with interest to verify her Beyonder powers.

At the same time, she felt that there was no need to reveal her identity to Fors.

It would be better to keep some secrets. Yes... Let's see when she finds out! Audrey withdrew her gaze, producing a faint smile on her face as she quietly watched from the sidelines.

At that moment, since there were no new Roselle's diary entries, Klein controlled The World and said, "I want to know about the Devil and Guardian Sequences."

He was certain that The Sun knew the details of Sequence 6 Devil because he had previously mentioned Devil Studies, and in order to not expose the fact that he was investigating a series of murders, he had deliberately added the Sequence 5 Guardian of the God of Combat pathway—also known as the Giant pathway. It was the mainstream path for Beyonders in the City of Silver, so it was impossible for The Sun to be unaware of it.

As for the corresponding Sequence 9 Warrior, Sequence 8 Pugilist, and Sequence 7 Weapon Master, Klein had long since learned of the details from the Nighthawks' confidential information. As for information regarding Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin, he had just learned of its information from Bishop Utravsky. Therefore, the only thing that he could ask and be willing to pay a price for without wasting money was Sequence 5 Guardian.

In addition, he didn't directly ask The Sun, but instead issued this request to everyone, because according to the way things had developed, it was impossible for The World, who had just joined the Tarot Club, to know that the City of Silver held the Giant pathway.

"If it's just the Devil Sequence, I know a little about it." Alger, who had some standing in the Church of Storms, interjected.

Derrick Berg glanced at him and without a thought, straightened his back and said, "I'm very knowledgeable about these two Sequences.

"The payment I want is information related to the Fallen Creator.

"The equivalence of the two pieces of information will be determined by Mr. Fool."

Having said that, he realized that he had not received Mr. Fool's agreement as he hurriedly turned his head to Mr. Fool to make the request reverently.

Sun, don't blame me. You were the one who made the request... The corners of Klein's mouth twitched slightly as he said with a chuckle, "Sure."

Furthermore, when it comes to the understanding of the True Creator, none of the ladies and gentlemen present can compare to me... he added boldly in his heart.

While they were discussing this matter, The Magician Fors was stunned upon hearing the conversation.

The Devil Sequence is the Devil pathway? Which Sequence number is it?

What is the Guardian pathway? Which Sequence number is it?

I've never heard of it...

Fallen Creator? The True Creator?

God, they are actually exchanging information regarding the True Creator!

That deity is known as the most ancient and powerful existence amongst the deities.

What kind of organization did I join?

After receiving a positive reply from The Fool, The World said without any hesitation, "Deal!

"I request a private exchange."

I really want to hear it... However, I need to be frugal for the time being. There are still two more months until the new year. Endure it, Audrey! Audrey blinked her eyes, reluctantly withdrawing her gaze from The Sun.

Their sights, vision, and spirituality were then shielded by Klein.

The World quickly lowered his head and "wrote" on a conjured sheet of paper his own understanding of the True Creator, including standard likeness such as "The Hanged Giant" and the "Eye behind the Shadow Curtains," including the information that members of the Aurora Order believed that this evil god was the original creator of everything.

At the end, Klein had included his impression of the evil god through his interaction with the evil god's spawn, the sensation of the deity's aura, and the sensation when listening to the True Creator's voice.

"Fallen, twisted, bloody, crazy, evil."

Then, as Mr. Fool, he gave a comment, "This piece of information is slightly more valuable than the information regarding the Devil and Guardian Sequences, but the difference isn't that huge."

"Thank you, Mr. Fool." Derrick earnestly received the piece of goatskin and read through it carefully a few times.

The thing he was most concerned about was that the True Creator was known as the creator of everything!

Twisted, fallen, crazy... Derrick repeated the words, vaguely able to see the dark tragedy that had engulfed everyone in the City of Silver for more than two thousand years.

Did the Lord not abandon us? It's just that "He" had gone mad... Derrick found himself able to resist using blasphemous thoughts to examine the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God who was worshipped by the City of Silver.

"It's time for you to answer my question," The World urged in a hoarse voice.

Derrick restrained his seething and sorrowful thoughts and said after two seconds of silence, "When different species of creatures consume the Devil potion, they will experience different types of mutation. They will have traits that are unique to them. Which kind of Devil would you like to know about?"

There are actually distinctions? Klein was puzzled.

He soon realized one thing—there was a blind spot in his thought process!

What if the serial killer wasn't a human but an animal?

After consuming the corresponding potion, it could transform into a Devil animal!

Step by step, one Sequence at a time, it will turn into a Devil!

Although the probability of an animal losing control far exceeds that of a human's, it was still not enough to deal with "what ifs"... I have to investigate this... But in that case, there would be more questions. Where did the Devil, mutated from an animal, obtain the potion and Beyonder ingredients? It should be impossible for it to join Beyonder circles... Klein maintained his silence and manipulated The World to say, "What I want to know is the common trait of all kinds of Devils."

Derrick recollected and organized his knowledge before saying, "The most frightening thing about a Devil is that if you can cause lethal damage to it in a very short period of time and take action to put that into practice, then he can sense, notice, and grasp where the danger comes from and who it came from, and then selectively kill or seek revenge on them.

"And this period of time varies from a few minutes to a day. Different Devils have different instincts."

This ability is a little scary... However, it's different from a Clown's intuition. It doesn't seem like it can be used in combat but instead, detect the source of the danger ahead of time. It's closer to the "Whim [1]*" ability I've read in xianxia novels in my previous life... I don't know if I can interfere with or even block this intuition in this mysterious space above the gray fog. Would Stuart end up in danger...* Klein leaned back into his chair, seemingly uninterested in the subject of the discussion between The Sun and The World.

Seeing that The World didn't show any signs of surprise, Derrick continued, "They all possess the ability to gigantify their bodies and thus break free from their bindings, temporarily increasing their strength and speed; their skin is mutable, equivalent to wearing a layer

of hard armor; their blood and flesh can act as a retardant and reduce damage; they're immune to most toxins and do not fear curses or flames to a certain degree; they have innate flame and corruption-type spells; they're cold-blooded, don't panic, don't feel fear, and have a strong ability when it comes to physical combat; they're also adept at using various items to inflict damage.

"Their greatest weakness is that they tend to lose control. Even if they don't, they will often display a cold-blooded and cruel madness, being easily controlled by desires such as bloodlust and murderous intent."

Really strong, as expected of a Sequence 6 Devil. Could it be that among the 22 Beyonder paths below the High Sequences, Sequence 6 or Sequence 7 are the thresholds of a qualitative change? In this respect, different Sequences differ, thus they have become the dividing lines between ancient and modern Mid-Sequences... Klein controlled The World and said, "I'm very satisfied with your information."

Derrick didn't act modestly. He nodded and said, "Guardians seldom suffer damage. Once they enter a defensive state and give up attacking, few can break through their defenses below that of the High-Sequences. It's the same for numerous types of damage. When they attack, their corresponding defense will decrease significantly, but it will still be stronger than full-body armor.

"Their Sword of Dawn and their Hurricane of Light, as well as their other Beyonder powers, allow them to deal damage to any type of monsters.

"They're not confused by illusions. They can help their comrades within a certain range by taking damage and protecting them."

...

Following the descriptions given by Derrick, Klein couldn't help but sigh in his heart.

Compared to a Guardian, a Dawn Paladin's defense is like that of a child versus an adult. A Guardian would probably be able to withstand the bullets of a steam rifle... In the wars of this era, they wouldn't die unless they were focused on by large-caliber cannons.

1. This is an ability found in the novel, Yang God, where an expert is able to predict danger once they reach a certain stage in their cultivation.

When Derrick finished, Klein manipulated The World to nod and say, "More detailed than I thought.

"Transaction complete."

Before The World finished his sentence, Klein had simultaneously removed the barriers insulating Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Magician.

After a few seconds of silence, The World looked around and said with a dark smile, "I don't have any more requests for now."

Having a rough understanding of the process and its characteristics, Fors was eager to purchase the corresponding Sequence 8 Trickmaster of the Apprentice Sequence.

She clearly remembered that Mr. Fool had said that the reason she was troubled by the full moon was due to her low natural order of life, and that the pain would decrease with the rise of her Sequence.

This made Fors eager to obtain the next formula.

However, it would expose the Beyonder pathway I'm from... When everyone becomes familiar with each other and knows more about each other, exposure will become less of a serious matter. However, for the next few gatherings, I have to conceal that so that the members of the gathering won't be able to identify the real me... After thinking rather calmly for a moment, Fors said, "I wish to obtain the formula of Apothecary and Trickmaster. I will pay in cash."

She intentionally added the Apothecary formula to her actual request in order to cause the others to have a misinterpretation. If any member of the gathering really had the formula, she would still take it. She could then sell it at a higher price to Viscount Glaint who been longing for this formula for a long time. In any case, she definitely wouldn't suffer a loss because of this and might even make a huge profit.

As for money, Fors wasn't short of it for the time being. Not only were the royalties of her best-selling book entering into her account over time, it was accumulating to quite a sizable amount. Furthermore, she

also had additional income streams, such as the 650 pounds she had received from Miss Audrey in the Qilangos and Intis Ambassador Bakerland cases.

Poor Xio. She spent more than two hundred pounds to compensate the families of the two deceased which were involved in the Lanevus case. I wonder if Miss Audrey would pay her when things clear up... The note with Mr. Fool's honorary name on it was found in the bookcase of Viscount Glaint's house. Could it be that one of his ancestors was a member of this gathering? Is this a gathering that has been held regularly for decades if not centuries? Fors's thoughts were suddenly a little distracted.

Only two seats away from her, Justice Audrey was a little stunned when she heard Fors's request for the Apothecary and Trickmaster formulas before she accurately grasped Fors's thoughts.

She's Fors! The Trickmaster is for herself, and the Apothecary formula is to be sold to Glaint. She can also do this to complicate the situation and fool the others... Audrey nodded indiscernibly and was more certain of The Magician's identity.

She's not of a very high Sequence. At best 8, most likely 9. Who knows where Mr. Fool pulled her from or if she's from a special place... Her accent has the peculiarities of Backlund, but she's not necessarily in Backlund... The Hanged Man Alger was also observing the newcomer, making sure that she wasn't a threat to him.

The Sun Derrick didn't think too much about it. He was just trying to guess whether Miss Magician belonged to the City of Silver or if she was from the world where Miss Justice and the others lived.

Klein cast a look of pity at Miss Magician, not expecting much from her attempt to conceal her identity.

When you meet a Telepathist who is very familiar with you, you might not be able to conceal your true thoughts even if you know the other party's ability beforehand and are on guard against it. What's more, you didn't even know anything... The Fool, Klein, sighed in his heart for Miss Magician.

At the same time, he controlled The World who said hoarsely, “I have the Apothecary formula. 230 pounds.

“As for the Trickmaster formula, I’ll do my best to find it, but I can’t guarantee success.”

There was no contradiction between exchanging the Apothecary formula for money and using it to groom a useful helper. They could be run in conjunction, so Klein made The World speak first so as not to be intercepted by The Hanged Man or The Sun.

As for the formula for Trickmaster, he only had some ideas.

From his point of view, the mystical item, Master Key, was most likely related to the corresponding sequence of Trickmaster’s corresponding Sequence 9, Apprentice. If he were able to divine its origins above the gray fog, he might be able to find some clues.

Well, actually the most convenient way is to ask the existence suspected to be Mr. Door who keeps murmuring during a full moon. In addition to asking for help, he probably provides formulas and the “acting method” so as to make the target stronger and complete difficult tasks. Unfortunately, before the target is strong, they can’t even hear his ravings. They will break down and even be close to losing control. This results in a vicious cycle... Klein lamented.

Instead of responding to Mr. World’s words, Fors looked around and saw that The Hanged Man, Justice, and The Sun had no intention of opening their mouths.

It was obvious that they didn’t know the Apothecary and Trickmaster formulas.

“Mr. World, please try your best to find the Trickmaster formula as soon as possible.” Fors fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “As for the Apothecary formula, I plan to buy it now. How should I make the payment?”

The other party seemed to be a man from Loen as well, and he’s willing to accept gold pounds... But the gold pound has always been more recognized than the other currencies... As she spoke, Fors was also trying to determine The World’s background.

The World completely didn't mind her sizing him up as he said softly, "You can sacrifice the money to Mr. Fool after you return.

That way, the transaction will be closed.

"The exact sacrificial ritual is..."

Sacrifice? Mr. Fool can still accept sacrifices? His life's natural order has reached such a level? No wonder he used that tone to describe the owner of the ravings during the full moon... Fors listened and remembered, surprised and shocked, but she also felt that it was a matter of course.

After finishing his description, Klein displayed the Apothecary formula in front of The World and had the fake person hand it to Miss Magician.

"The transaction is witnessed by Mr. Fool, so you don't have to worry if it's fake."

"I trust Mr. Fool." Fors nodded immediately. She spread open the formula and began memorizing it seriously.

At that moment, Audrey, who couldn't bear to see her friend go through such labor, commented, "You can seek Mr. Fool's help during the sacrifice to recall the formula. You don't have to memorize it specially. If you encounter any problems, you can also pray to "Him" by reciting "His" honorific name"

"Him"? Miss Justice is actually using a salutation used to describe deities to address Mr. Fool!? "Him,""Him"... Could it be that he is really a "He"? But, why would he be willing to help us in doing such trivial matters... That's not right. As long as the ritualistic magic is done right, the seven orthodox gods will also often respond to their believers and complete their requests... Fors said to Justice, "Thank you for telling me that. Your name is just like your character."

"..." Audrey suddenly felt a little guilty.

She suddenly seemed to recall a problem as she hurriedly asked, "Miss Magician, do you know of the 'acting method'?" "Acting method?" Fors looked at Justice in a daze.

She soon discovered that the other members such as The Sun and The Hanged Man had no additional reaction to the term. Clearly, they knew what it meant.

Today's gathering makes me feel like a country bumpkin who has just arrived in Backlund... I've been to so many Beyonder gatherings at the very least, alright! Fors thought, half sorrowfully, half joyously.

She couldn't help but want to write a novel with this feeling of hers, naming it "Miss Wall's Tour of Dreamland."

"You don't seem to know." Audrey made a definite judgment based on Fors's reaction and her usual performance.

She turned around and looked at the person shrouded in gray fog at the end of the long table.

"Mr. Fool, can I teach the 'acting method' to Miss Magician?

"If so, what price would she have to pay?"

Audrey had intended to ask directly if it was like before—trading the information for entries of Roselle's diary. However, she quickly remembered that there was a great overlap between the Beyonder circles of Fors and her own. Therefore, if she did that, she might lose many opportunities of obtaining Roselle's diary.

It's not a very important problem since it's just a matter of time before Fors realizes that Mr. Fool wants Roselle's diary, and I would certainly have other Beyonder circles. However, she knows that I have a few pages of Roselle's diary, and if she wants to collect them, she will come to me immediately. However, Mr. Fool has read all of those diary entries... After this gathering, I have to find a chance to tell Fors that all the Roselle diary pages were accidentally lost... Audrey predicted the chain of events and tried her best to convey her concerns to Mr. Fool in body language.

What's Miss Justice hinting at? Oh, she knows Fors, but she doesn't want to reveal her identity, which means that she doesn't want the payment I request to cause any trouble in that regard... Klein thoughtfully chuckled.

"You can make the decision. You can do the explanation since I do not wish to repeat what I've said in the past."

This is also a form of respect to the Goddess... he added inwardly.

Praise Mr. Fool! Audrey's heart leaped in joy.

She straightened her back and slightly raised her chin. She tried to look at Fors in a different manner as she said, "The 'acting method' is a method to speed up the mastery of potions and minimize the risk of losing control.

"Do you want to know about it?"

There's such a method? For real? Mr. Fool is such a lofty figure, so he definitely wouldn't lie about such a small matter! Fors widened her somewhat languid eyes, pursed his lips and said, "Yes!"

As long as one was a Beyonder, there was no way they wouldn't wish to learn of similar methods! Fors suddenly felt thrilled.

Audrey thought carefully and said, "There are two requirements. One, without the permission of Mr. Fool, you are not to teach the 'acting method' to others.

"The second is to pay 200 pounds."

Her original plan was to use Roselle's diary as a benchmark for the price. The number of pages she and The Hanged Man had used to repay the debt had been converted into a corresponding price, but in reality, Roselle's diary was sold cheaply because it couldn't be deciphered, and most of the time, it was impossible to determine which was the real one. Converting that to a total price was quite a letdown to the value of the acting method; therefore, she added a little more from that benchmark.

Hmm... If Mr. Fool's Blessed is no longer short of money, then I will take the 200 pounds, and I will look for the diary entries to repay my debt with Mr. Fool... Audrey had already thought of a follow-up deal.

200 pounds? The method to reduce the risk of losing control is 200 pounds? Th-that's way too cheap, isn't it? Fearing that Justice would

go back on her word, the surprised and happy Fors said without hesitation, “Deal!”

After she finished speaking, she felt her heart pain for the money. She felt that her bank balance was decreasing at a speed that was visible to the naked eye.

Audrey was about to apply for a private exchange when she suddenly discovered one thing. The World, who was seated at the other end of the long bronze table, didn't show any interest in the "acting method" at all. He didn't even have the urge to ask about it.

Does he already know about the "acting method," or did he consult Mr. Fool privately? Audrey mumbled to herself, still cautiously asking for a private meeting.

Then, looking at Fors, she said in a measured voice, in both her choice of words and pronunciation, "Our attitude towards potions isn't about grasping them, but rather it's about digesting them.

"The key to digestion is to "act," and the key to "acting" is the corresponding potion name." "Why?" blurted Fors.

After a moment of deliberation, she added another question, "Then, how should one "act"?"

Audrey recalled Mr. Fool's pose and examples, repeating the description of the castle, the guards, the invitation, the disguise, and finally saying, "In short, the goal of 'acting' is to reconcile the body, heart, and soul, bypassing the stubborn resistance of the remnant headstrong psyche of the potion so as to assimilate and digest it."

As a fiction writer, Fors had a strong imagination. After Justice was done with her description, she had already sketched out the corresponding scenes in her mind, and she had basically understood what Justice was trying to convey.

Is that so...

So this is how you eliminate the remnant psyche influence in the potion and reduce the risk of losing control.

The more I think about it, the more I feel that this is possible!

...

The bewilderment in her mind gradually lessened, and the feeling of surprise slowly filled her heart.

Finally, she asked for confirmation, “Was this taught by Mr. Fool?”

“Yes, if not for Mr. Fool, we might’ve already lost control. Our continued existence is proof of the ‘acting method’s’ effectiveness,” Justice praised from the bottom of her heart.

Phew... Fors exhaled and felt her future brighten with hope.

Could this be the fortuitous encounters described in all kinds of novels? This feels so good! However, I shouldn’t be careless. Mr. Fool might be a malicious, evil god with deep secrets... Fors reminded herself.

Immediately, she began to think about an even more important question: how to act as an Apprentice.

Just from the word alone, Apprentice means that one’s skills are not mature enough in various aspects. Does this mean that one should still accept guidance and focus on studying? One shouldn’t flaunt one’s superiority and be arrogant, and one has to understand the insignificance of their own strength? Fors quickly let her thoughts wander and didn’t realize that the environment for individual communication had been discontinued.

At that moment, The Sun, Derrick, looked around silently, gritted his teeth and said, “I want to know which seven gods you are talking about, and the general situation regarding them.”

He couldn’t help but ask this question that had been plaguing his mind for a long time.

...I know that! Audrey almost failed to react at first, but she quickly figured out what The Sun was asking and raised her right hand slightly.

At the same time, The Hanged Man and The World also indicated that they could answer.

...What are they doing? Fors looked on blankly, trying to remember what had just happened.

After a moment, she remembered The Sun’s question. She then began ruminating over the implied meaning behind his words.

It can’t be? He actually doesn’t know about the Seven Gods? Where did he come from? Fors looked at Mr. Sun, who was just a teenager.

In the Northern Continent, other than insensible children, there wasn't anyone who didn't know of the seven orthodox deities!

Even the poor who struggled to survive and the tramps were no exception!

To them, the occasional free food offered by the cathedrals was so tempting that the workhouse was a flame of despair.

People from the Southern Continent's colonies? However, there's no need for him to ask such a simple question! Just find a cathedral and ask a pastor or a priest to preach a sermon, and you'll be able to figure out the relevant content! Where does The Sun actually live? What a freak! Fors looked from side to side while mumbling to herself, but Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and Mr. World weren't surprised.

At that moment, the fog-immersed Klein saw that there were three people eager to answer. He smiled and said, "Mr. Sun, who do you want to trade with?

"What are you willing to pay?"

The Sun Derrick pursed his lips and thought for a few seconds.

"I'll trade with each of them individually."

Only then can I obtain the most comprehensive information... In the harsh environment of the City of Silver, Derrick had matured quite a bit from his previous patrols and clearance operations.

He paused for a moment before requesting, "The reward is that you can ask me a question, the kind that I can answer."

"I agree. I'm very interested in the City of Silver." Audrey smiled faintly without any hesitation.

City of Silver? Where is this place? Why haven't I heard of it? Fors looked around blankly, feeling completely at a loss as to what they were talking about.

Audrey glanced at her and kindly explained, "Mr. Sun is neither in the Northern or Southern Continent, nor is he on an island in the ocean. The City of Silver is located outside of our understanding, or you can say he is beyond the limits of our exploratory efforts."

Are you kidding me? Fors subconsciously had this thought.

However, with that thought, based on The Sun's performance, and the fact that it was impossible that the others were ganging up to cheat her, Fors quickly accepted Audrey's explanation.

This secret gathering is even more incredible than I thought... Mr. Fool is more powerful than I thought... Fors exhaled silently and sighed with emotion.

Audrey vaguely read her thoughts, and for a moment she was tempted to flaunt about how the deaths of Vice Admiral Qilangos, Intis Ambassador Bakerland, and the swindler, Lanevus, was a result of the Tarot Club.

What a pity. If Fors were to learn of these three things, she would immediately associate Audrey with Justice. I have to keep it a secret... Audrey, even if it's hard on you, you have to keep this a secret! Audrey suddenly took a deep breath.

Since she didn't know much about the City of Silver, she didn't know what to ask. Fors didn't participate in the following transaction and chose to spectate from the sidelines.

As for The Hanged Man and The World, they successively agreed to The Sun's request.

The happiest of all was Klein, for this meant that he reaped thrice the rewards.

During individual communications, The Fool could hear the conversation! Klein obviously didn't have any plans of insulating himself.

Sun, you sure are simple! He laughed in his heart.

As there was a lot of information about the Seven Gods, Justice, The Hanged Man, and The World could only "write" what they thought was important. After a while, they each passed on their descriptions to The Sun.

Derrick quickly scanned through the information, and his eyes stopped on a few lines.

In addition to the Lord who created everything, the oldest gods are the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Lord of Storms, the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Those churches were the oldest churches.

Why haven't I heard of any of these... I've never heard of any of these gods... I feel like there's something very important hidden here... Derrick knew that each Tarot Club gathering had a time limit, so he hastily ended his review, intending to go back and pray to Mr. Fool for help in awakening his memories.

Then, the first one to raise a question was Justice.

Due to the serial murder, she was interested in the Devil Sequence, so she imitated Mr. World and asked the appropriate questions.

Derrick answered with verve and added something, "In the corresponding Sequence 7, a Beyonder of the Abyss pathway can effectively interfere with divination and spirit channeling."

A Devil's powers sure are terrifying. I wonder if my Sequence 7 Psychiatrist will result in a qualitative change... Or would I need to be Sequence 6? Audrey felt a little apprehensive from what she heard.

The second question came from The Hanged Man.

He seemed to have considered this question for a long time. Looking at The Sun, he opened his mouth and said in a deep voice, "I want to know the creation myth of the City of Silver."

The slightly tense Derrick relaxed a little and said, "The omnipotent and omniscient God created everything and entered a state of deep slumber.

"The Giant King, Aurmir; the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt; the Elf King, Soniathrym; the Vampire Ancestor, Lilith; the Devil Monarch, Farbauti; the Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace; the Mutant King, Kvastir; and the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea split the remnant powers of authority, becoming lords of the sky, land, and ocean. They ruled over reality, the spirit world, and the astral world. They were deities who ruled over various races and were truly deities, the ancient gods."

Flegrea? Klein, who was listening, suddenly noticed a familiar word.

Whenever he advanced, or when his condition was unstable, or when he came into contact with the remnant influence of the Antigonus family's diary, he would always hear some illusory, incomprehensible raving coming from somewhere.

"Hornacis... Flegrea... Hornacis... Flegrea... Hornacis... Flegrea..."

Klein had known for a long time that Hornacis was referring to the mountain range where the ruins of the Nation of the Evernight was, but he had never known what the word Flegrea meant.

And now, for the first time, he heard Flegrea coming out of someone else's mouth!

King of Demonic Wolves, an ancient deity!

But why was "He" involved with the Hornacis mountain range? Klein maintained his unperturbed position as he quietly listened to Derrick's recount.

"Some of them perished in the battle among themselves, while others were stripped of their authority after the awakening of the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God.

"The first part is the creation myth, and the second part is about the City of Silver's true history."

Alger wanted to know more, but as The Sun was unwilling to say more, he could only stop in time and turn his attention to thinking.

The King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, had left the stage of history in the Second Epoch, in the Dark Epoch long before the Cataclysm? As he pondered, Klein manipulated The World to ask a question.

What he had wanted to ask was which Sequence allowed a Beyonder to freely switch between the body and the spirit, just as Miss Sharron did. If The Sun wasn't aware of the answer, he could consider something else.

But now, he had something more important to know about, so he hoarsely said, "Everything about the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea."

The Sun, Derrick, looked at Mr. World in astonishment and frowned.

“I don’t know much about this ancient deity.

“He’s also known as the Annihilation Demonic Wolf and the Evernight Demonic Wolf.”

“Evernight Demonic Wolf... Evernight?” Klein slightly narrowed his eyes.

The Nation of the Evernight, at the peak of the Hornacis mountain range, believed in the Ruler of the Evernight, the Mother of the Sky... Is there some connection between that and the Evernight Demonic Wolf, Flegrea? The illusory ravings I hear are actually "Hornacis... Flegrea?"

What is the connection between the ancient god, Evernight Demonic Wolf Flegrea and the Goddess? According to Roselle, Sequence 0 is equivalent to a true god, and each sequence can only have one Sequence 0... The Goddess had inherited the authority from the Evernight Demonic Wolf? He wasn't the oldest deity, nor was he the eye of the Creator as he claimed?

Yes, there's a circumstantial clue that doesn't count as proof. The Life School of Thought worships the moon, the crimson moon that evolved from the Creator's eye, but they don't believe in the Evernight Goddess...

Klein suddenly made several connections as he manipulated The World to speak.

"Is there nothing else?"

"No. Matters regarding the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, is also considered a myth in the City of Silver." Derrick felt as though he had not given any answers. He suggested out of embarrassment, "Mr. World, you can change to another

question."

Change the question? Little Sun, you're too honest... Then I won't stand on ceremony! Klein made The World say hoarsely, "Your honesty and trustworthiness leave a deep impression.

"I met a Beyonder before. He was able to freely switch between the body and spirit, and they were also able to direct zombies. Do you know which pathway this belongs to, and which Sequence it is?"

Although it was impossible for The Sun, who was located in the Forsaken Land of God and the City of Silver, to form a connection

with the capital of the Loen Kingdom, Backlund, Klein was cautious enough to change the pronoun referring to Miss Sharron from “she” to “he.”

“By the way, he’s not a High-Sequence Beyonder,” The World added in a deep voice.

Derrick recalled the education he had received seriously before saying, “If he’s not a High-Sequence Beyonder, then the Phoenix pathway can be eliminated.”

“The Phoenix pathway?” Klein deliberately made The World show a certain level of surprise.

After attending so many gatherings, Derrick was very clear that there was a discrepancy between the terms used by the City of Silver and Miss Justice and company. Therefore, Derrick explained without finding it strange, “It’s the Beyonder pathway that governs death and partly controls the spirit world.

“Its Sequence 9 is Corpse Collector.”

So it’s the Death pathway... From the looks of it, Phoenix ancestor,

Gregrace, was Death during the ancient times... Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table in a composed manner. He controlled World as he nodded.

“I understand. You can continue.”

Derrick replied immediately, “I can only think of two possibilities. One is a type of special Devil. Just like I previously said, the Devils that evolve from different species can have their differences. There is a type that can freely switch between body and spirit, but they’re rather rare. And they might not be able to direct zombies.”

“Can they be humans?” The World asked.

“No, not that I know of any similar examples,” Derrick said honestly.

“What about the second possibility?” Klein thought back to Miss Sharron’s usual performance in battle, and The World changed his sitting position.

Derrick replied seriously, “Mutants.”

“Mutants? Isn’t that referring to monsters?” The World asked hoarsely.

Klein clearly remembered that Mr. Azik had mentioned that the term “Mutant” was the general term for humans that were put under a curse. Due to the different curses, Mutants transformed into different races.

They were usually the same as humans, but their hearts were always filled with a suppressed, twisted desire in their hearts. Their desires erupted when they came into contact with a certain scene or object, turning into monsters. They would then succumb to their desires for blood and bloodshed.

Every time they unleashed their desires, they would become slightly more merciless and apathetic. Finally, they would lose all their positive feelings that are expected of a human.

The most common Mutant was the Werewolf.

Derrick nodded frankly and said, “That’s right. Mutants are the various kinds of monsters that evolve from humans due to the negative effects of certain Beyonder characteristics.”

It’s not a curse, but the negative impact of some Beyonder characteristic? Sitting upright in the thick gray fog, Klein found this to be different from what Mr. Azik had described.

Is this the understanding of Mutants from before the Cataclysm? General knowledge in the City of Silver is quite precious to the Beyonders of the Northern and Southern continents... Klein became increasingly aware of the special nature of the Forsaken Land of God.

At this moment, Derrick continued, “The characteristics which Mutants possess happen to form a Beyonder pathway. Therefore, ordinary people can turn into Mutants by consuming potions as well.”

“A Mutant pathway? Which pathway is this referring to? What is the name of the corresponding Sequence 9?” Klein asked curiously through The World.

Derrick ignored the first few questions, treating them as a necessary supplement.

“In the City of Silver, the corresponding Sequence 9 is called Prisoner.

“The mind is the prisoner of the body, and the body is the prisoner of the world. This refers to the madness that is restrained and the desire that is oppressed.”

Prisoner? This pathway is held by the Rose School of Thought. They’re famous for their bloody sacrifices, and worship of the socalled Chained God... Miss Sharron doesn’t look like such a coldblooded, indiscriminate person... Wait a minute, Maric was apparently being pursued by some faction. Were he and Miss Sharron traitors of the Rose School of Thought? Their betrayal was because they didn’t want to turn into crazy heretics? Klein speculated as he made The World say, “I’m very satisfied with your answer. Transaction complete.”

Following that, a few members shared their experiences and news.

As for Klein, he ended the Tarot Gathering just before his spirituality was exhausted.

When the area above the gray fog returned to its peaceful state, even the fake World was gone. He then started to travel back and forth between the real world and the mysterious space, bringing the Master Key to the ancient palace.

Although I deduced from Roselle’s diary that there is a high probability that there isn’t a Sequence 0 for the Apprentice pathway, I can’t be rash. If there is a Sequence 1 or 2, they might be able to counterattack effectively across space... And what if there really is a Sequence 0? I shouldn’t gamble with my life... After Klein recovered, he wrote a divination statement: “Its origin.”

Next, he held the Master Key in his hand so as not to misdirect the moniker “it.”

Leaning back in his chair, Klein chanted the divination statement and gradually fell asleep.

In the gray haze of the shattered world, he saw a bronze lamp rack with many flickering candles.

Around the lamp rack was what seemed to be a secret room, devoid of any external light. There were long tables, black iron pots, glass jars, brown colored notebooks, and other items.

A young man wearing a classic black robe stood in front of the long table, staring at the potion in his hand.

“Ancestors, I am about to embark on the path of extraordinariness. I will definitely reproduce the illustrious glory of the Abraham family!” he mumbled to himself and drank the potion.

The muscles on his face contorted in pain.

Suddenly, he cried out miserably and fell to the ground. He squirmed continuously, strangling himself.

After a few seconds, he tore off his clothes, stripped off his skin, and turned into a monster covered in blood.

Boom!

His flesh exploded, and each piece of flesh seemed to possess a life of its own as they continued to crawl in every direction, leaving behind signs of corrosion.

In the end, they were unable to leave the secret chamber and gradually calmed down.

The specks of light gathered together and combined together with a broken finger, forming an ancient and simple-looking brass-colored key.

At the same time, Klein saw a silver pocket watch inlaid with diamonds among the tattered clothes.

After the dream ended, he opened his eyes and looked forward. He said with a sigh, “Seriously, he said he wanted to restore the glory of the Abraham family, but he failed at the first step... It’s risky even at Sequence 9...”

The Abraham family was a powerful aristocratic family of the Tudor Dynasty during the Fourth Epoch. It was said that they held the Beyonder pathway of Apprentice, but it was very likely that it was incomplete.

Klein recalled the scene he had just seen. He tapped his fingers on the edge of the table and muttered to himself, "He spoke in the Loen language. I can't tell where his accent is from.

"It was during the last ten years since it became popular to embed pure diamonds into pocket watches.

"Perhaps I should visit the Harvest Church when I have the time and ask Father Utravsky where he got his Master Key from... Perhaps I can find some clues."

Just as Klein was about to leave the fog, the illusory star that symbolized The Magician began to swell and contract. Fors was requesting a sacrificial ritual.

Fors usually wouldn't have carried so much cash on her, but she had been planning to attend a Beyonder gathering, so she had left 500 pounds to see if she could buy what she wanted. Who knew that the corresponding gathering had been canceled because of the circumstances. Now, she could use it to pay for the Apothecary formula and the "acting method'—a total of 430 pounds.

Seeing the screen of light appear and seeing the paper money disappear, it took Fors a few seconds to react. She sincerely thanked Mr. Fool.

I shall sell the Apothecary formula to Viscount Glaint for 300 pounds. I can't be too greedy, or else this will ruin our long-term partnership... As for Miss Audrey, I'll ignore her for the time being. She has hopes of coming into contact with the Psychology Alchemists and obtaining the corresponding formula directly. If there's really no hope with that, I'll try purchasing it from the Tarot Gathering... Sigh... I have to see if the "acting method" is effective. If it is, then I have to consider how to pray to Mr. Fool. Oh... Xio is such a fool. She has always been acting as an Arbiter and had unknowingly fulfilled the requirements of the "acting method"... Fors began thinking of the future.

When he received the 430 pounds, Klein also received a prayer from Miss Justice. She said that if Mr. Fool's Blessed no longer needed cash, she could promise to exchange the 200 pounds for Roselle's diary entries to make sure that Mr. Fool was satisfied.

I'm satisfied. I'm only a few dozen pounds short of a thousand pounds! Klein declined Miss Justice's offer.

Then, he busily helped The Sun "awaken" his memories regarding the seven gods.

After doing all this, Klein returned to the real world in exhaustion. He drew the curtains open and started going through the dossier with the information regarding the serial murders, searching for the animal that might have existed.

City of Silver, in a cramped room.

Derrick Berg was sitting by his bedside, quietly recalling the information regarding the seven gods that he had received.

The names of the deities that he had never heard of and the vague ancient myths all indicated to him that there was a new world outside which was completely different from the City of Silver.

Is that a piece of land that hasn't been forsaken by the gods? Or perhaps, it's a land that is protected by new gods? Derrick sat in the dark, motionlessly. Lightning flashed from time to time outside the window, bringing with it intense light.

He slowly focused his thoughts on the different authorities that were concentrated in the hands of the seven gods, and he compared them with the ancient gods such as the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt.

The so-called God of Combat is very similar to Giant King Aurmir. The Lord of Storms wields authority similar to the Elf King, Soniathrym. The Evernight Goddess appears to be the fusion of the King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, and Vampire Ancestor, Lilith. As for the Eternal Blazing Sun, Earth Mother, God of Knowledge and Wisdom, and God of Steam and Machinery, I can't find anyone corresponding to them...

Regarding the mythical legends, I wasn't too attentive in class and missed out a lot...

Phew, since there's no patrol duty during this period of time, I should head to the spire's library and read up on them.

Derrick stood up and did as he planned.

The problem he faced was shared by the majority of the residents in the City of Silver. When they were being educated with general knowledge, their focus was all on the practical courses such as Devil Studies, Monster Classification, Charms, and Beyonder Foundations. They were all focused on the knowledge that could be used to deal with monsters in the dark and increase the production of edible plants.

As for supplementary classes like Myth Studies, they often didn't pay much attention.

If the history regarding the City of Silver hadn't been able to make the residents more united, raise their sense of honor, or heighten their sense of mission, and how the six-member council was very strict in this regard, Derrick believed that he could at most remember what had happened in the last two or three decades.

Carrying the Axe of Hurricane, Derrick walked out of his house, following the clean, simple, but old and mottled stone road until he reached the twin towers on the north side of the city.

One of the spires of the twin towers served as the City of Silver's library, an exchange spot where merit points could be exchanged and daily necessities could be distributed. The dome was where the six-member council resided and was rumored to contain a mystical item which had sustained the City of Silver for more than two thousand years, as well as a repository for formulas and ingredients.

Entering the spire, Derrick went straight up to the third floor and, according to his recollections, found the shelves where materials regarding mythology and the corresponding ancient books were stored.

Just as he was about to take out a book related to the creation myth, a slender, fair-skinned, and good-looking palm rushed forward and took the book away from him.

Derrick traced the arm, and after a single glance, he lowered his head, pressed his hand to his chest, and said in a low voice, "Greetings, Elder Lovia."

The one who had taken the book from him was one of the members of the six-member council, Shepherd Lovia.

She wore a long black robe embroidered with mysterious purple patterns. Her silvery-gray hair was thick but curled up slightly.

Her face was smooth and fair, her appearance gorgeous. She looked to be in her early thirties, and her pair of light gray eyes seemed to be able to pierce through one's soul.

Lovia tersely acknowledged Derrick's greeting and gently nodded her head without saying anything else. She silently took the ancient book and left the space between the two bookshelves.

Elder Lovia seems to have returned to normal. She's not like before, always switching between different temperaments at random—sometimes crying, sometimes sneering, sometimes grunting angrily, sometimes indifferent... Such a thought subconsciously flashed across Derrick's mind.

Suddenly, he felt an inexplicable sense of fear.

It was because Elder Lovia was acting normally...

Normal...

...

After reading through the entire dossier, Klein found no record of any animals.

It was obvious that the original investigation had overlooked this problem.

Yea, I have to remember my earlier considerations. I can't rashly perform my own investigations. Without talking about how I don't have the special means or confidence to avoid a Devil's intuition towards danger, just the possibility of me meeting a Nighthawk would be a very troublesome matter. My goal is to always take an auxiliary role. My job is to analyze the case and suggest conjectures and determine if a clue is authentic... Klein considered what he needed to do.

After understanding the abilities of a Devil, he temporarily didn't dare to hand over the matter of investigating whether or not the previous suspects had pets to Stuart. That would have a high chance of injuring Stuart.

It's only in the preliminary stage of investigations without any direction. It's likely Stuart wouldn't encounter any problems. A Devil isn't like those bunch of lunatics from the Aurora Order. He wouldn't proactively expose himself. Tomorrow or the day after, Stuart will definitely hand in a report. Perhaps there might be clues that others

might not be able to detect. Klein stood up and stuffed his hands into his pockets as he paced around the activity room.

Now, his dilemma was on how to get the main investigation body to include animals under their radar.

I definitely can't mention it directly, as that would attract the suspicion of others. It would be the same if I attempted to guide them in the dark... Klein thought carefully as he weighed the matter seriously before finally deciding on a plan.

He pulled out a letter, grabbed a fountain pen, and wrote:

"Dear Mr. Stanton,

"I thought of a problem. Previously, when the detectives were in discussion, they all found the murderer's actions skilled without any hint of inexperience. They believed that he couldn't be born with such skill and that he must've had a lot of experience to build up his foundation. Examples of such people can be surgical students from med school or a butcher.

"Back then, I thought he might have done something like this before. It's a direction for investigation, and it's what I'm paying the most attention to right now.

"But after thinking about it over and over again for the past two days, I don't think it's comprehensive enough. Perhaps, he didn't rely on killing people to gain experience.

"Is it possible that he practiced with poor animals? Different kinds of living animals.

"The number of animals that die in Backlund daily is innumerable, and those that disappear in the sewers are also unknown. Therefore, these are very good training targets.

"This is my inchoate opinion. I hope to communicate with you.

"Sherlock Moriarty"

Klein didn't directly mention that the murderer might have been an animal that had turned into a Devil. He also used the reason of practice, hoping that Isengard Stanton would take note of the neglected "animal

world," thereby reminding the official Beyonders responsible for the case.

While he was writing, he suddenly felt that this was also a direction.

The reason why the Devil hadn't been caught all this time was because it had been hunting animals most of the time.

And the hunting of animals wasn't something worth paying attention to.

Well, let's hope it will inspire them... Klein folded the letter and dressed up to deliver it to the mailbox at the end of the street.

Fifteen minutes later, Lawyer Jurgen, who saw Detective Sherlock passing by his oriel window again and again, finally couldn't stop his urge to open his door and asked politely, "Mr. Moriarty, did you forget your key?"

"Uh, sort of." Klein squeezed out a smile.

"Why don't you come to my house as a guest? After dinner, you can go back after dark. I know that you private detectives are very good at climbing." Jurgen invited him in with a serious expression.

Seriously? Klein was stunned for a second before he smiled sincerely.

"It's my honor."

After all, Lawyer Jurgen's grandmother had the standard of a capable chef!

And he could also tease the cat while he was there!

...

When it was completely dark, Klein, having had his fill, rested for a while at home before leaving Minsk Street with his cane.

He planned to make another trip to Rose Street, on the south side of the bridge, and ask Bishop Utravsky about the origin of the Master Key.

With the help of Dowsing Rod Seeking, he successfully arrived at the Harvest Church in the dead of night and sneaked in through the same route as before.

However, Bishop Utravsky wasn't repenting in the cathedral's hall tonight. There were only rows of pews in the silence and gloom.

"He's resting?" Klein felt slightly puzzled as he walked towards the living area at the back of the hall.

As he rounded the corner, he saw the tall, giant-like Bishop Utravsky walking up the basement stairs. The heavy stone doors situated there were being banged on by someone.

Who did he detain in the basement? Klein instantly thought of a series of warped ideas.

Bishop Utravsky looked up and saw Klein disguised the same as before. He was also surprised as he asked, "Haven't you found your way home yet?"

...Do I look like someone who's been lost for so long? Klein forced a smile.

"Father, I'm not lost."

"You think that the formula is fake? That's impossible..." Bishop Utravsky frowned and stopped midway up the stairs.

As a result, he was at the same height as Klein.

"No, it's genuine," Klein answered honestly.

At this moment, the basement's stone door was thumped again with ever-increasing intensity. Along with the thumps was a male voice that shouted, "Let me out." "This is?" Klein couldn't help but ask.

Bishop Utravsky smiled warmly and said, "A vampire."

As soon as he finished, the man in the basement shouted, "What's wrong with being a vampire? Do you think vampires should be locked up here? Do I have to listen to your nagging and scripture recitals every day? Bullshit, I'm a noble Sanguine, so don't use such a vulgar name to describe me!

“Let me tell you, I worship the moon, and I’ll absolutely not convert to a believer of Earth Mother! Give up, you damned

priest!”

It was Klein’s first time meeting a real vampire, so he couldn’t help but ask, “Father, where did you catch him?”

Bishop Utravsky gave Klein an odd look before saying, “He is the original owner of the Master Key.

“One day, he got lost and entered this cathedral.”

...Klein seriously considered the dilemma of whether he should carry the Master Key with him in the future or not.

It’s a good thing that I can divine... he thought thankfully.

“It just so happened that he had entered a state where he thirsted for blood, and I had discovered his abnormality,” Bishop Utravsky added with a smile.

“Bullshit, don’t talk about blood! What I need is the blood of a beautiful young girl, not the blood of a dirty old man like you!” The vampire in the basement suddenly became enraged.

Bishop Utravsky explained without a trace of anger, “When he craves blood, I will give him some of mine.”

Klein nodded and looked again. He found that the heavy stone door in the basement was engraved with the Sacred Emblem of Life and many mysterious symbols, forming a complete seal.

During the day, when more and more people start praying, it would be impossible for the sound to even reach the outside... Klein made a preliminary judgment.

“Is there anything I can help you with?” at that moment, Bishop Utravsky asked.

Klein answered frankly, “I want to know where the Master Key first came from.”

“You’ll have to ask him.” Bishop Utravsky pointed to the basement.

The vampire inside suddenly became quiet before he leisurely laughed and said, “Friend, I can answer your question.

“But the condition is that you rescue me first.”

He actually named his price... Upon hearing the vampire's request, Klein felt both irritated and amused.

He looked at the Bishop Utravsky, who was standing in front of him, and asked, "Father, may I borrow your candle? The one that you used last time. I've forgotten what it's called."

Before Bishop Utravsky could reply, the vampire in the basement spoke in a stunned voice.

"What do you want to do? What do you want to do?"

At this moment, Bishop Utravsky answered warmly, "It's called the Mental Terror Candle. What are you borrowing it for?"

Father, you're very cooperative. You even knew to ask... The corners of Klein's mouth curled up.

"I plan to use it to directly inquire the deepest part of this friend's heart.

"As you know, I'm quite talented in this area, and I'm very good at such matters..."

Before he could finish his sentence, the vampire in the basement had already shouted, "Bastard, give up on your idea!

"You will be cursed if you do this to a noble Sanguine!

"Hey, hey, hey! I'll speak! I'll speak! I'll tell you the origins of the Master Key!"

Klein immediately chuckled.

"Thank you for your cooperation."

"Hmph! The friend of that dirty old man naturally isn't a good person! As a Sanguine, all I did was go to the hospital to steal blood bottles to drink. Why did I end up locked up in here and forced to listen to this naggy, housefly-like Bible of Life!?" the vampire in the basement angrily complained.

Frankly speaking, if you really are who you claim to be, and you bumped into me, at most, I would give you a warning.

Unfortunately, you got lost and entered this cathedral. The priest you encountered used to kill people wantonly and enjoyed combat, but he's now pious and repentant. You can only blame your poor luck... However, with Bishop Utravsky's recovery, he's unlikely to hurt you. At most, he will keep you to his side.... Klein silently responded.

The vampire in the basement paused for a few seconds and said, "About a month ago, I went to the hospital in South Borough to steal blood and ended up meeting a thief.

"He originally wanted to enter the hospital's finance department, but he ended up lost. He opened the door to the blood bank and ended up being caught by me.

"He was using that Master Key. He told me that he had found it back when he had burgled a particular house. He had also obtained a pocket watch with inlaid diamonds. Uh, in the basement.

"At first, he thought that the key would correspond to a room or safe. He made several attempts and found that the key could open all doors. This is no doubt an unimaginable surprise for a thief. After that, he enjoyed numerous successes until I caught him and confiscated his key.

"Damn, I didn't expect that the key would make one get lost back then!"

It matches the scene I saw with my divination... However, is there a curse on the Master Key? The previous owner was detained because he got lost, and the owner before that was caught redhanded because he got lost... Perhaps I should really throw it into the space above the gray fog and take it out when I need it. But, that will be a lot more troublesome and might cause delays to certain matters... Klein controlled his expression and asked unhurriedly, "Did the thief say where he stole it?"

The vampire in the basement mumbled, "Are you doubting my intelligence? How could I not ask about this?

"He said it was in the area south of the bridge, 48 Riverbay Avenue. I was planning to check it out when... Damn it!

“Alright, I’m done answering. Don’t disturb me anymore.”

Klein didn’t leave just because he received an answer. Instead, he slowly took out a halfpence copper coin and recited softly, “He’s lying.”

...

After repeating it seven times, Klein’s eyes turned dark, and he flicked the coin up. He watched it spin in the air before it landed in the palm of his hand.

It was heads, indicating a positive response.

In other words, the vampire was lying!

The thief’s description coincides greatly with what I had seen through divination, so they confirm each other... The vampire must’ve lied about the exact address! Klein looked at Bishop Utravsky and said with a chuckle, “He lied.

“Let me think about the reason why he lied.

“It would be very unwise of him to vent his anger and seek revenge on me, who is completely uninvolved. It would also be very detrimental to his situation.

“So, I think he’s actually using this method to call for help. That address might very well belong to a companion of his. Father, do you plan on paying a visit?”

The basement suddenly fell silent. After a few seconds, the vampire laughed and said, “I just didn’t want to tell you that easily. You threatened me just now, so I lied to take revenge on you. Isn’t that normal?”

I can hear how forceful you are at trying to calm yourself down... Klein smiled and said, “Then, what’s the real answer? If you continue lying, I don’t mind sending this address to the three Churches. I’ll just say that it has something to do with the recent serial murders.”

“...Humans are really vicious...” The vampire sighed through gritted teeth. “The area south of the bridge, 32 Verdi Street.”

Klein tossed the coin again and got the result that the vampire wasn't lying.

It seems like vampires don't have the ability to interfere with divination... Hmm, I should confirm it above the gray fog when I'm back... Klein pressed his hand to his chest, faced the heavy stone door, and bowed.

"Thank you for your cooperation."

"Hmph," the vampire in the basement snappily replied.

As Klein turned to leave, the vampire suddenly shouted, "Remember that my name is Emlyn White. Remember, my name is Emlyn White!"

Why do I have to remember your name? It's not like I'm going to save you. Without preparation, and without a home ground advantage, I'm no match for Father Utravsky, and he has the mystical item to transfuse blood... Hmm, could it be that this vampire's companion will offer a bounty, and he wishes for me to sell this information? Klein was surprised for a moment before he walked out of the Harvest Church without a word.

After finding a secluded place, he undid the spirit pendulum wound around his left wrist and started to divine if he should visit 32 Verdi Street at that very moment.

The answer he got was that there was some danger, but it wasn't too high.

There is certain danger... Where's the danger? What kind of danger would it be? Klein carefully analyzed the situation, suspecting that the Apprentice who died from losing control had turned into a ghost-type monster due to its intense grievance. Furthermore, it was a relatively strong one at that.

That's not right. That thief clearly came out with the Master Key without encountering any trouble. Could it be that the danger is in another secret location in the house? Klein thought for a moment and decided that it would be best for him to go only when he was sufficiently prepared. It prevented him from entering a situation in

which he encountered an enemy whom he was unable to deal with, with his present Beyonder powers.

At the very least, I'll have to wait until I buy bullets that can purify wraith shadows... He nodded slightly.

After this consideration, combined with his previous battle with Dawn Paladin Bishop Utravsky, Klein suddenly felt that he could vaguely conclude the first principle of a Magician: "Never perform unprepared!"

Doing otherwise would result in a high chance of messing up... Klein added silently.

...

On Tuesday morning, after preparing butter and toasting two slices of bread, Klein was in no hurry to eat. He opened the door and retrieved the day's newspaper from the mailbox.

Eh, there's a letter... He pulled the letter out from the newspaper and glanced at the envelope as he returned to the dining room.

It's from Stuart... It appears that he has already completed his preliminary investigations. Klein nodded slightly, tore open the envelope, shook the piece of paper, and sat down at the dining table as he read it.

Stuart claimed that the two suspects had shown no signs of abnormal behavior. One of them entrenched himself at the grocery store and guarded his wife and children, living a lifeless life, while the other was busy with various temporary jobs and working hard to maintain his life. They were not irritable, nor did they have the urge to fight. They also didn't lock themselves up in a room.

At the end of the letter, Stuart lamented the harsh situation in East Borough and vowed to save enough money to avoid being reduced to staying there when he was old.

"Thank you for your help. I will share my findings with the rest of you if there are any other clues," Klein replied to the letter simply when he saw how Stuart had no signs of being discovered. He didn't want Stuart

to delve deeper into the case, or else the Devil might detect the danger and kill any latent dangers in advance.

Putting away his pen and paper, Klein picked up a piece of bread that had already been soaked in butter and leisurely spent his breakfast with a cup of black tea and the newspaper.

During this process, he felt rather regretful that there were no signs that the Beyonder gathering organized by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom would be held.

Sigh, the existence of this Devil has seriously affected the lives of the Backlund Beyonders. I hope Mr. Isengard Stanton is able to notice my hint and be fruitful. Yes, he should be a "recognized" Beyonder by the officials... Klein put down the newspaper and picked up a napkin to wipe his mouth before he packed up to leave.

His plan today had been already decided last week.

He was to visit the Royal Museum for the Emperor Roselle Memorial Exhibition!

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was wearing a light lace dress and donned snow-white fur as she waited for her personal maidservant, Anne, to help her put on a soft hat with pearls and a thin fishnet veil.

Beside her, Susie sat there with a bow tied around her neck.

"My beautiful little princess, where do you plan on going?" Earl Hall asked, stroking his fine mustache as he descended the stairs.

Audrey's eyes replied with bright eyes, "Father, I plan to attend the Roselle Memorial Exhibition."

I can take a look at the original diary of Emperor Roselle and find a chance to get some for Mr. Fool... she added in her mind.

Earl Hall muttered to himself, "Why are you going today? There will be a lot of people, and the scene will be very chaotic.

“Yes, I’ll get someone to coordinate with the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery. After the official exhibition is over, they’ll open its doors specially for you and your friends for half a day. That way, you can have a quiet and undisturbed tour.

“If you have anything you wish to look at closely, you can discuss it with them directly.”

In that the case, that seems even better. I can directly look through the diaries in this exhibition... Audrey lifted her skirt and curtsied.

“Thank you, handsome Earl Hall~”

Chapter 317: Roselle Memorial Exhibition

West Borough, 2 King's Avenue, Royal Museum.

Although it wasn't a weekend, there was a long line at the door when Klein arrived.

According to the descriptions in the newspapers and magazines, he knew that the world's middle class had fewer ways of entertaining themselves. Other than reading newspapers, reading novels, listening to opera concerts, playing tennis and squash, enjoying plays, and holding or attending banquets, there were only three options: going to a park, going to an exhibition, and going on vacation. Due to Emperor Roselle's influence, annual vacations were already common phenomena.

At nine o'clock sharp, Klein, who was wearing a silk top hat, a black cane, and a long double-breasted frock coat, followed the people in front of him and entered the museum.

There was a split here, and the different guides led a number of visitors down different passages.

Klein and nearly twenty people followed a good-looking woman and listened to her introduction of Roselle's life.

This was of zero value to Klein, who was half a historian, so he was so bored that he began confirming the location of his wallet.

Since his wealth had soared to 952 pounds, just a step away from a thousand pounds, his wallet could no longer hold so much cash, and he could only carry some of it selectively. As for the rest, Klein didn't feel at ease to just leave them at home without protection, so he threw them all above the gray fog.

As they walked, they entered the first exhibition hall. The female guide excitedly said, "Ladies and gentlemen, these are the daily necessities of Emperor Roselle.

"Look, that's his velvet quilt, and that's the golden glassware he used to drink his wine.

"That's the toilet he used, the first toilet in the modern sense."

...

Even a toilet he had used before is being exhibited? Klein suddenly felt some sympathy for Roselle.

Then, he looked at the toilet with a flushing system behind the glass wall and saw that it was shimmering with golden light. It seemed to have a layer of gold foil on its surface, and it was engraved with an exaggerated and artistic pattern.

How extravagant... Klein no longer sympathized with Roselle.

Separated from the toilet by only a glass layer was Roselle's everyday clothing, including cuffs, a shirt with pleats at the collar, and so on.

It was obvious that the female guide was rather impressed by Intis's dress culture.

After the Daily Necessities Exhibition Hall, there was a display of the original versions of the important documents which Roselle had issued, including the Civil Code and other extremely valuable historical relics.

At that moment, the female guide pointed at a display cabinet and said, "This is one of the diaries left behind by Emperor Roselle. It uses his self-created mysterious symbols that have yet to be deciphered to date. Many historians and archaeologists believe that these notes contain the least known secrets of Emperor Roselle.

"As a romantic, I have my own guesses. Perhaps these are the symbols he had agreed upon with his most beloved woman. They wrote about each other, but were never able to truly be together."

You're suited for writing novels... The corner of Klein's mouth twitched. His eyes then turned to the notebook that was spread open in the display cabinet. On it were the simplified Chinese he was extremely familiar with.

"6th March. Dammit, I'm almost constipated from eating the food here!"

"17th March. Are the ladies of Intis so open? Did I hit on her, or did she hit on me? I just find it odd."

“22nd March. It’s time to choose a religion. On one side is the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, and on the other is the Church of Craftsmanship.

“My choice is without a doubt. Praise you, God of All Machinery!
“One day, I will make the Church of Craftsmanship change its name to the Church of Machinery.”

...It’s indeed very romantic... Romantic constipation... This should be a diary entry written by Emperor Roselle in his early days. It’s without any valuable information... His handwriting is even uglier than mine... Klein looked away and tsked.

Of course, he only saw the two pages that were spread open. He didn’t know what else was on it.

I wonder how the security measures here are. I wonder if there is a chance of sneaking in and flipping through them... Klein looked around and saw that there were quite a few security personnel on the surface.

Perhaps there are Beyonders from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery... he muttered under his breath and followed the female guide as he blended in with the crowd. He entered the next exhibition hall which was called “The Gentle Roselle.”

“This is Emperor Roselle’s first love letter. This is his first love poem he created — “When You Are Old [1].” The female guide looked at the manuscript in the display cabinet with glimmering eyes.

Shameless! Yeats’s coffin can’t be held shut any longer! Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

“This is a bracelet he made. This is the original manuscript of his novel...” The female guide introduced with a tone of extraordinary adoration.

... Klein tried hard not to let his expression change.

Of course, he also believed that Emperor Roselle, who was an Artisan in his Beyonder profession, was definitely very skilled in his craftsmanship.

“This is the basic education textbook that he improved to educate his children. Each word has its own corresponding picture... It was a little game he had invented for his children, similar to Intis chess, but somehow it didn’t become popular... These are the toy blocks he invented; these were also for his children...” the female guide said in a gentle tone without even realizing it.

Isn’t this fucking Chinese Chess... Furthermore, Lego wants to collect the licensing fees from you! Klein could only smirk to hide his other emotions.

With a single glance, he noticed that there was a woman over 1.7 meters tall standing in front of this display cabinet.

The lady had chestnut hair that fell to her waist, and she had a perfectly proportioned figure. She was neither fat nor thin.

She wore a yellow layered dress which had the vibes of a young girl, but she wore a black, out-of-fashion bonnet, with a fishnet veil hanging down and concealing her face.

She stood in front of the display cabinet and stared at the items inside for a long time without leaving.

Even when Klein and the others followed the guide to the next exhibition hall, she remained rooted to the spot.

After passing through a few more exhibition halls, the female guide pointed ahead and said, “The next thing you will see is Emperor Roselle’s restored study.

“Of course, it’s only a part of it.”

As she spoke, Klein and the others entered the exhibition hall as the area before them opened up.

It was almost like a library, lined with shelves which were two stories high. There were ladders sitting beneath them and aisles between them leading to a three-dimensional book park.

“You can imagine how the owner of this place had once climbed up and down the ladder in search of the book that he wanted to read...” The guide painted a vivid picture.

No, Roselle would definitely send his servants to seek it out for him. He wouldn't do it himself... Klein silently refuted.

In the center of the row of bookshelves were desks, chairs, brass lampstands, and the like. They were all protected under the cover of glass and were blocked from making contact with the outside world.

With a single glance, Klein found a stack of manuscripts which were all yellow in color.

The stack of manuscripts weren't spread out, so one could only see the contents of the first page.

It was a drawing of a rectangular object with a detailed description: "This is a portable, miniaturized application of the telegraph. Through it, one can connect to the person holding the same item and receive and exchange information. You can even converse with them directly.

"This requires better positioning. I think we can boldly cast our sights to the sky. There are no obstructions in the sky, and it would allow for better transmission of signals."

...

Emperor, you aren't even letting go of a cell phone... Klein couldn't help but facepalm.

At that moment, the guide introduced the stack of manuscripts.

"...These record the wonderful ideas of Emperor Roselle. They record inventions which he was unable to turn into reality in time. They record the glory of what our human civilization is capable of!"

Klein didn't pay any attention to the flattery and instead casually sized up the other things.

Suddenly, he noticed a bookmark in a hardcover book on the desk.

The exposed part of the bookmark depicted a drawing which was randomly drawn by a child.

Emperor Roselle isn't good at drawing... Just as Klein was mocking inwardly, he suddenly thought of something—Roselle had once

disguised a Card of Blasphemy as a bookmark and placed it inside a certain book!

Could it be this one? Klein carefully observed for a few seconds, but he didn't find anything amiss.

That's right. He had mentioned before that the Cards of Blasphemy possess anti-divination and anti-prophecy characteristics. Under normal circumstances, there's no way to discover their uniqueness... If it were so easily recognized, the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery would have long taken it away... Klein cast his gaze away and began scrutinizing the other books. He discovered that many of them had a bookmark in them, and all of these bookmarks were of different shapes.

He pondered for a moment, and using his Clown's ability to control his facial muscles, he curiously asked, "Are these all books that Emperor Roselle has read before? "Sorry, I mean, are these the original books?" The female guided nodded firmly.

"Yes, these are all the items from Emperor Roselle's study from back then. They include, but are not limited to, books, manuscripts, bookmarks, lampstands, ink bottles... But even more were destroyed during the several conflicts."

Klein nodded slightly and studied the bookmarks again.

Roselle had said in his diary that he was going to put the Card of Blasphemy in a very valuable book so that no one would ever think that the most valuable thing in that book was actually an obscure bookmark... Well, which of these books are valuable? Klein began eliminating books as he recalled the details written in the diary.

"Glorious Era," doesn't look like it...

"The History of the Intis Kingdom," doesn't look like it...

"Geography of the Northern Continent," this might be possible, but it isn't very likely...

"The Improved Principles of Steam Machinery," just like before...

Klein scanned the books, one by one, when his eyes suddenly came to rest on the first pile of manuscripts he saw.

They were recording objects from Earth objects which Roselle had wanted to invent but lacked the conditions to do so.

There was also a bookmark in it, and on it, there was a depiction of Roselle in royal Emperor clothes.

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1. Poem by William Butler Yeats.

His manuscripts of plagiarism. No, his manuscript of creativity should be considered a very valuable book... Could that bookmark be a Card of Blasphemy? Klein's heart skipped a beat, lightly tapped his molars, and quietly activated his Spirit Vision.

However, he didn't find anything abnormal.

He then scanned the other bookmarks and obtained the same answer.

That's right, if it's that easy to detect it, it wouldn't have remained till this day for me to have this thought... Klein deactivated his Spirit Vision, and once again, he thought via method of elimination, based on the details he had learned from Roselle's diary and the personality the Emperor had shown.

As far as he could tell, since Roselle had said that the book with the Card of Blasphemy was valuable, it couldn't be too ordinary, or it wouldn't satisfy his sense of warped humor—to use lots of valuable knowledge to serve as a foil for an unobtrusive bookmark would be a form of teasing the recipient of the book.

Thus, books with value but aren't of great value can be ignored. In that case... Klein looked around, trying to make sense of it, completely turning a deaf ear to what the guide was saying.

In summary, in the entire study, the only book that fulfills these conditions is that manuscript of creativity. The others are only ordinary in value. With Roselle's personality, he definitely wouldn't choose them. Yes, Roselle is the kind of person who would claim 'I'll hide the secret in the most obvious place, but none of you can find it"... As Klein imagined this, he added a cackling expression to the Emperor in his mind.

Of course, there's no way he could confirm that the bookmark was the disguised Card of Blasphemy because the books Roselle had, which were of great value, clearly included those in the field of mysticism. And those books were definitely not going to be put on display by the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery!

Yes, I have to first confirm if it's the Card of Blasphemy before considering if I should take action... Unfortunately, I can't use the date 20th January as a method of elimination. No one knows which bookmark is placed into which book on and on which day... Klein silently muttered to himself and turned to look towards the guide. He asked with a smile, "Do the books on the shelf also have things stuffed in between them?

"For example, a note written by some noble lady to Roselle."

This question made many men give a knowing chuckle. The female guide shook her head and said, "No, there aren't any. The books that contain other items have all been taken out and placed here for everyone to see.

"This is just a restoration of Emperor Roselle's study, not the restoration of a particular point in time. There is no need to maintain an immutable state."

Klein laughed and said immediately, "I understand, this sure is disappointing..."

That's simply great! There's only one bookmark in the entire exhibition hall that requires verification. The difficulty has greatly fallen... he added happily in his heart.

As the guide introduced "Roselle's Favorite Books," Klein looked around the room again, taking in the overall layout.

To restore the room from more than a century ago, there were no gas lamps around the room.

The lighting mainly relied on the iron-barred oriel windows that were a few meters away and the huge crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

As for the brass lamp on the desk, there were no candles installed. It was purely a decoration.

Looking out the oriel window, Klein saw the yellow, withered lawn and a straight, iron-black lamppost.

He took note of the location and turned his attention back to the book the female guide was introducing. In his mind, he began to analyze the feasibility of the theft.

There's one premise. According to Roselle's intentions, the various Churches and the ancient royal families wouldn't wish for him to spread the Cards of Blasphemy and destroy the stable order that has been in place for more than a thousand years.

Therefore, if I'm an archbishop in charge of handling this matter, I will directly burn all of Roselle's items. If the Cards of Blasphemy can be destroyed so completely, the outcome will perfectly suit the thoughts of the deities. If the Cards of Blasphemy are difficult to be destroyed, they will definitely expose their abnormality after the burning.

Since Roselle's items still remain, that means that he used certain methods to make everyone, including the deities, believe that he had sent out all the Cards of Blasphemy without keeping a single one.

Of course, I can't eliminate the possibility that some Churches or ancient families might attempt to use the Cards of Blasphemy to make up for their incomplete Beyonder pathways. But this possibility is very tiny. This is because it will give Roselle an opportunity to come up with a united front strategy. There wouldn't be a need for him to go so far as to destroy the order by spreading the Cards of Blasphemy.

In that case, his diary will show a certain level of confidence and corresponding concern, and he definitely wouldn't be left with pessimism to the point of only thinking of relying on that ancient secret organization.

Furthermore, it's been more than a hundred years. The Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, who has retained these remains, must've made numerous supplementary searches. Therefore, no one would believe that the Card of Blasphemy remains hidden in here.

In other words, the security level of this exhibition wouldn't be too high.

Besides, the most important point is that Backlund is currently under siege by the terror caused by the Devil's serial murders. The Beyonders of the three Churches must be sweeping through the entire city. The

amount of manpower that the Machinery Hivemind Squad can afford to place at this unimportant exhibition would be extremely limited.

Yes, the thing most worthy of protection here is Roselle's diary. Many wild Beyonders worship the Emperor greatly. They believe that the book written with independently-created symbols must contain more profound mysteries. There's a motive to stealing them, and they have the ability to do so. Therefore, the guards' focus will definitely be in that exhibition hall.

I'll do a divination above the gray fog when I'm back to verify my analysis.

However, I have to first test if it's a Card of Blasphemy. Otherwise, I would be taking a certain risk and wasting tremendous effort only to steal an ordinary bookmark. If that happened, I might as well lie back in my grave! Yes, how should I verify it? It can't wait till I infiltrate again, and I don't have an opportunity to do so now... I have to find someone to help... I have to be careful! Klein's followed behind the guide with a focused expression as though he was very attentive.

Miss Magician is an Apprentice. She is able to go through walls and doors. It's like she possesses a Master Key, so she's a good candidate... However, she's only Sequence 9. The mission of infiltrating to do the verification is way too dangerous for her...

Miss Xio? No, she wouldn't be up to this... Let her get a thief to help? No, that's won't do. There are Beyonder guards here. The thief would most likely get caught on the spot, which will expose the fact that someone is looking into Roselle's bookmark...

Miss Sharron? She's powerful enough, and her state is suitable for this kind of quest, but the problem is that the Card of Blasphemy is a divine object that can make most Beyonders willing to kill. I still don't trust her enough...

...

Klein thought, analyzing the helpers he could use.

Gradually, he had a candidate in mind: Miss Justice!

Is it possible for her to use her wealth and power as a noble to touch the bookmark, using her interest as an excuse? Hmm, there are plenty of opportunities. Furthermore, this method won't alarm anyone. It would be beneficial for me to sneak in and steal it in the future... The more Klein thought about it, the more he found it feasible.

As for the question of how to verify it, as the Card of Blasphemy possessed anti-divination and anti-prophecy characteristics, the only solution he could think of for the time being was—to attempt to destroy the bookmark!

Doesn't anti-divination and anti-prophecy mean that using a similar method on a particular object that hides a Card of Blasphemy would result in failure or interference? Wouldn't that be tantamount to exposing itself?

What it really means is that even with the Card of Blasphemy, divining it will be equivalent to divining an ordinary object. The divination would result in something equivalent to the ordinary object.

In any case, I can't figure out what "password" the Emperor set. I can only use such a simple and crude method to confirm it. If the Card of Blasphemy can really be destroyed, then it only means that I'm temporarily unfated with it... Yes, with the Emperor's liking, perhaps I can try an activation incantation...

He once joked in his diary, saying, "My fortune is yours for the taking, but you'll have to find it first. I left everything I own at the ends of the Fog Sea," and the Card of Blasphemy is one of those treasures!

The activation incantation could be set to "One Piece" in ancient Hermes? That's not right. That way, there would be no one who can obtain anything, unless a second transmigrator appears. This isn't in accordance with the Emperor's intention to create chaos and destroy order, so the corresponding word for "Pirate King" was in either Hermes or ancient Hermes?

Klein slowly confirmed his thoughts, paying more and more attention to the layout of the exhibition hall.

Under the guidance of the female guide, they left the restored study and entered another exhibition hall.

When everything was over, and he was free to move around, Klein said, a little embarrassed, “Excuse me, but I would like to know where the washroom is? Upstairs?”

“No, that’s where our office is. If you follow this path until the end before turning left, you will see it.” The female guide politely pointed in a direction.

Using this opportunity, Klein figured out the connections of the washroom and several large exhibition halls, and he sketched out a rough layout in his mind.

At noon, he left the Royal Museum without doing anything and returned to 15 Minsk Street.

Klein had originally wanted to instruct Miss Justice as The Fool, saying that his Blessed needed help. But on second thought, he felt that it would ruin the image of Mr. Fool.

As an unfathomable figure, he has to appear calm and collected.

He can’t always be helping his Blessed. At the very least, he can’t be personally bringing up such matters, time and time again... Klein thought for a moment and quickly worked out a solution.

He decided to pass on the image and voice of his “Blessed’s” plea directly to Miss Justice.

In the process, Mr. Fool didn’t say anything!

Phew. Klein exhaled, drew the curtains, rubbed his cheeks, and began to pray to himself, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

“I pray for your help.

“I hope that someone can help me touch the bookmark in

Roselle’s manuscript of creativity.

“Help me inflict small and unnoticeable damage to it and tell me of its results. While doing so, one can recite the corresponding term for ‘Pirate King’ in Hermes or ancient Hermes.

“No matter who helps me, even if there isn’t a reaction, I will be willing to pay them 500 pounds. This can be deducted from the 5,000 pounds that has not yet been paid.

“If there is a reaction, I am willing to give more.”

...

After doing all of this, Klein waited for a moment before entering the gray fog, and he saw the scene of his prayer displayed on the screen of light.

After divining that “the theft of the bookmark in the Royal Museum” involved a certain amount of danger but wasn’t too high, he extracted the plea, and added more of a “mosaic” effect to it. He also distorted his voice slightly, and he threw it into the illusory star that symbolized Miss Justice.

Chapter 319: Audrey's "Adventure"

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was supposed to be practicing her piano at this time, but she remained seated in front of her dressing table, thinking about how to read and memorize Roselle's diary in the evening.

Suddenly, her surroundings became hazy, and a boundless grayish-white began to emanate.

In the middle of the gray fog, The Fool's figure sat high above. He was listening to a man who was barely visible pray, "...I pray for your help.

"I hope that someone can help me touch the bookmark in

Roselle's manuscript of creativity."

...

How does Mr. Fool know that I'll be visiting the Roselle Memorial Exhibition this evening after the museum is closed, and that I'll have the opportunity of touching some items... Audrey listened in a daze. Although she was amazed, she didn't find it odd.

With Mr. Fool's stature and abilities, being aware of such a trivial matter is very easy!

As for how he learned of it, there was no need for ordinary Beyonders to attempt to comprehend it.

Audrey was about to reply when The Fool spoke in a low, flat voice, "You can choose to accept this request or not."

Hmm... Audrey pondered for two seconds and said, "Respected Mr. Fool, I can try, but I can't guarantee success."

She wasn't really interested in the minimum reward of 500 pounds. The reason why she had accepted the mission was that she was curious about the special nature of the bookmark left behind by Emperor Roselle, which was so important to the Blessed of Mr. Fool that he offered an uncapped price.

Anyway, I was going to look through Roselle's diary today, so it's convenient... Audrey thought.

Amidst the fog, The Fool nodded slightly and replied with a single word, “Okay.”

When the illusion was completely gone, Audrey turned her gaze to the dressing mirror and seemed to examine herself closely.

Feeling both nervous and excited, she began to make plans for the evening operation.

I cannot let them notice anything unusual.

Even if Mr. Fool’s Blessed does take any action later, I cannot become a suspect.

It’s definitely not okay to only touch that bookmark. The moment it’s lost, all eyes will be focused on me.

Yes... So, I need to show equal interest in all the other objects. I cannot let others notice that my main goal is that bookmark. The entire process has to be fluid, nothing sudden, and it has to be reasonable and logical.

How should I cause inconspicuous damage?

It’s just a bookmark...

Audrey’s eyes swept across the items on her dressing table without focus. Suddenly, her gaze fell on an open jewelry box and focused on a pair of gemstone earrings adorned with fine needles.

The corners of her lips curled up, bit by bit, as her eyebrows and eyes slightly curved as she muttered to herself, “With Susie’s help, it should be enough...”

...

It was six o’clock in the evening. Backlund, that hardly ever saw the sun during the current season, was already dark, and the gas lamps were lit up.

After the Royal Museum sent off the last batch of ordinary visitors, it received a group of visitors composed of the young lady from a count family, the child of a duke, and a young viscount.

As the Machinery Hivemind knew that some of the aristocratic children were foppish people who frequently caused trouble, the

Captain of the Machinery Hivemind's West Borough squad, Max Livermore, was responsible for guarding the memorial. He had no choice but to disguise himself as a security guard and stay close by to prevent any accidents.

His hair was neatly combed as he wore a monocle, making his scholarly appearance akin to a college professor.

The monocle was actually a Sealed Artifact, codenamed 3-1328, named Eye of Crystal. With it, Max Livermore could see the spiritual body directly, as well as ghosts and shadows. There was no need to fear Beyonders who used these usually difficult to detect entities to cause chaos or engage in theft.

Of course, this Sealed Artifact also had a significant disadvantage. It could easily attract monsters like wraiths and shadows to the vicinity. If it was worn for a long time, one's vision would suffer irreversible damage.

In the gloom of Backlund, she's like the bright sun... At that moment, Max was looking admiringly at the blonde girl with green eyes to his side.

Audrey looked with great interest at the toilet which was goldplated and engraved with intricate patterns. She asked the guide beside her, "Is this the first toilet in the modern sense?"

"Yes, I personally believe that this is one of Roselle's most outstanding contributions to human civilization. The sewer works that go with it have changed the phenomenon of filth being all over the streets of Trier." The guide originally wanted to say the word "feces," but after looking at the girl in front of him, he felt that he couldn't lose his elegance.

Audrey hesitated and asked, "Can I touch it?"

"Can it still be used normally?" Viscount Glaint asked with a laugh from the side.

"Why are you so curious about this? No matter how old it is, it's ultimately still a toilet."

The other aristocratic children who were on good terms with them all laughed.

“No, Glaint, you don’t understand. This is the glory of human civilization.” Audrey smiled faintly in response but barfed inwardly.

If it wasn’t to fulfill the request of Mr. Fool’s Blessed, I wouldn’t want to do this either... She sighed helplessly.

The guide chimed in, “What Miss Hall said is very right. The glory of human civilization isn’t only reflected in firearms and other weapons that have changed the form of war, but they also shine in every detail of our lives.

“My lady, I don’t know if it can still be used properly, because no one will use it.”

The guide glanced at Max Livermore and, after receiving a nod of confirmation, continued, “You can touch it, and you may even open the water tank to take a look at the mechanical structure inside. But please be careful.”

“Thank you.” Audrey watched as the security guard opened the glass wall. She hurriedly took two steps forward, reached out her right hand, which was covered in white fishnet gloves, and carefully touched the flush button.

Then, she slowly stepped back and said with a smile, “Alright, let’s keep it at that. I’ve satisfied my curiosity. I can’t hurt it any further.”

She constantly reminded herself that her prescribed character was that of a naive and curious young girl.

After reading this, they entered the exhibition hall where Roselle’s diary was located.

After some introduction, Audrey asked again, “Can I look through this notebook? We are all interested in these strange symbols.

“Eh... I heard that paper would suffer damage by mere contact with air after a certain period of time, let alone having them touched. It shouldn’t be possible, right?”

She blinked, making her beautiful gem-like eyes express sincerity and desire, together with a little disappointment.

The guide looked at Max Livermore again and waited for his reply before smiling.

“The Church used a special storage method to make the paper look the same as if it was produced only a few years ago. Furthermore, even without this method, we will try our best to fulfill your requests. However, we may need to change environments, change our clothes, and go through a stricter process.

“You can flip it, but not for too long. Don’t use too much strength.”

Audrey’s eyes lit up all of a sudden, making it hard for anyone to shift their gaze away.

After sincerely thanking the guide, she, Viscount Glaint, and the other mysticism enthusiasts had the glass cover removed as they carefully flipped through the notebook.

Audrey tried her best to memorize, but due to the complexity of the symbols, her ability to remember them in this short period of time was rather limited.

That should be around two pages of content. I wonder if there’s any way to make a copy of it... Her thoughts wandered as she gave her spot to her peers.

In this way, she made a request for a closer look at something in each of the exhibition halls, which was mostly met.

After a while, they arrived at the restored study.

Audrey kept to her previous behavior and would ask a few questions from time to time, fully displaying her curiosity.

When the guide introduced the manuscript of creativity, her eyes lit up and she said, “Can I flip through it? I wish to see what the manuscript of the great inventor, Roselle, looks like. I also want to know what wonderful ideas it contains.”

“No problem, beautiful Miss Hall, honorable Viscount Glaint, you can all have a look through it. Heh, if any of you are a devout believer of

the Church, you can even apply for a copy," the guide replied, according to Max's gesture.

As a believer of the Goddess, Audrey could only respond with a faint smile. It wasn't convenient for her to make a comment.

At the same time, she pretended to lift her hair and touched her right ear with her palm, quietly removing her earring.

Immediately, when the glass case that encased the desk was opened, Audrey stepped forward and, holding down the manuscript, casually pulled out the bookmark, before casually flipping a page.

At this moment, Susie, who had received her hint, suddenly barked in a particular direction.

Woof! Woof! Woof!

The crowd's attention was immediately attracted in that direction. Audrey lowered her arm and used the earring in her palm to stab at the bookmark she was holding. While doing so, she chanted the phrase "Pirate King" in her mind, using Hermes before switching to ancient Hermes.

When the sharp, needle-like accessory touched the surface of the bookmark, Audrey suddenly felt an intense and illusory resistance just as it was about to penetrate the bookmark.

An unusual resistance!

The resistance disappeared in a flash. The "fine needle" punctured a tiny hole and nearly pierced through.

There really is a reaction! There's really something strange about it! The light in Audrey's eyes glinted. Without daring to try again, she lifted her hand and placed the bookmark on the desk.

Then, she looked at Susie and calmly told her maidservant, Annie, "Eh... take her to the bathroom."

"Yes, milady." Annie hurriedly led Susie out of the room.

Ting!

Taking this opportunity, Audrey threw the earring in her hand onto the ground, then she tilted her head and said, “I’m sorry, I dropped my earring.”

Another maid hurried over, picked up the earring, and helped her put it on.

The interlude went by in a flash, and everyone’s attention returned to the manuscript. After they were pretty much done with it, they saw the “security guard,” Max Livermore, quickly tuck the bookmark in and closed the glass cover again.

Audrey’s interest remained as strong as before in the next few exhibition halls. Just like before, she didn’t show any abnormalities.

It was only when she left the museum and returned home did she find a chance to recite the honorific name of The Fool and report the results:

“...I did what your Blessed requested, and I damaged that bookmark a little.

“It-it had an abnormal reaction.”

An abnormal reaction? From the looks of it, it really is a Card of Blasphemy! Above the gray fog, Klein, who received the reply, was delighted at first, but he then exclaimed in surprise.

Isn't Miss Justice way too efficient?

I only entrusted the mission to her this afternoon, and she has already completed the verification by the evening...

Furthermore, this is obviously past the closing time of the Royal Museum!

A Telepathist also definitely lacks infiltration abilities!

Hmm, her family's influence is probably even greater than I expected...

Thankfully, the verification didn't produce any strange phenomena; otherwise, the only thing that can be done is to allow Miss Justice to act innocent and hand the card over to the higher authorities. And this also means that I'm not fated to have this treasure... There's nothing in this world with a hundred percent certainty...

Amidst his thoughts, Klein heard Miss Justice's subsequent question.

"Mr. Fool, exactly what secret lies in that bookmark?

"Well, if your Blessed is unwilling to give you the answer, just pretend that I didn't ask."

Of course, the secret is that it hides a Card of Blasphemy inside! Klein was overjoyed as he silently sighed.

After thinking it over carefully, he decided to wait until he obtained the Card of Blasphemy before replying to Miss Justice; otherwise, she might appear too shocked and act strangely, causing his own actions to be negatively affected.

Klein was in no hurry to return to the real world. He just sat there in the silent, empty old palace, thinking about when to act and how to do it.

Miss Justice has done some damage to that bookmark, so I wonder if someone would later discover the damage... Otherwise, would the

bookmark slowly show signs of abnormality and attract attention... Thus, I cannot afford to delay or wait. It would be best if I take action tonight! As all sorts of ideas churned through his mind, Klein gradually came to a decision.

Then, on the basis of his morning observations, he conjured the layout of the Royal Museum's first floor and the general conditions surrounding it.

Looking at this blueprint, Klein began going through different plans and quickly established a relatively safe plan.

Finally, he made another divination to confirm the degree of danger.

After seeing that nothing had changed, he returned to the real world and began making all sorts of preparations.

What Klein originally wanted to do was to "draw" the pattern in his memory, forge a similar bookmark, and replace it after he had sneaked in via responding to himself. He wanted to ensure that no one noticed or know for a long time that the bookmark had been stolen. By the time it was discovered, it would be too late for others to trace the incident back to him.

However, after much deliberation, he felt that this wasn't good. As long as the fake bookmark was discovered, the most suspicious person would be Miss Justice who touched the original bookmark today.

I can't put Miss Justice at risk for the sake of a treasure. She did this to help me! Klein finally figured out how to keep Miss Justice from being suspected.

His plan was to not only steal the bookmark but to also steal the surrounding items as well, including some of the lighter books!

Phew... After finishing his preparations, Klein took out his gold pocket watch and opened it. He patiently waited until after nine. He wanted to act before midnight.

If he were too early, people living around there wouldn't have started sleeping. That wouldn't satisfy his requirement for taking action. If he were too late, there would be almost no pedestrians on the streets. Just walking along the streets would make him be easily suspected, and

during this period of time, the whole of Backlund was under tight curfews due to serial murders.

This was beneficial to Klein's operation, but it was also disadvantageous!

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. The needle kept ticking. As the night deepened, the crimson moon appeared and it was finally past nine.

Putting the Master Key and other items in his pockets, he took his cane and first went to East Borough to change his attire. Then, he rented a carriage several times until he reached a place quite far from King's Avenue in West Borough.

By then, an hour and forty-five minutes had already passed.

His initial plan was actually nothing like this. He wanted to summon himself and respond to himself to become a spirit body. He wanted to rely on his extremely fast speed to cross the distance from Cherwood Borough to West Borough before infiltrating the Royal Museum.

However, he eventually abandoned the plan because of the potentially high risks.

Backlund had more than one High-Sequence Beyonder!

In a situation where a serial killer caused everyone to panic, yet remained unsolved for such a long time, there might be HighSequence Beyonders who were consciously using their Beyonder powers or corresponding Sealed Artifacts to monitor certain areas. The distance from Cherwood Borough to West Borough was neither too long nor too short, and the probability of being discovered was substantial if such a special spirit flew like this.

This cannot be completely written off just because the divination result says that "the risk isn't high, but there is the existence of certain danger," because the divination doesn't give a direct answer, but a revelation that needs to be interpreted.

In other words, the results of "the risk isn't high, but there is the existence of certain danger" is built on the premise that I make a relatively good choice.

Therefore, to be careful, Klein modified his original plan but retained the core idea.

...

2 King's Avenue, Royal Museum.

There were four security guards standing on top of a polygonal roof. Dressed in thick robes, they were enduring the cold of the autumn night as they carefully monitored their respective directions. Once anyone approached the museum, even if they were hidden by the trees or building shadows, it would be difficult to hide from their eyes.

From this arrangement alone, it could be seen that the security company that had been employed was very professional.

"There's still half an hour before our shift ends..." A security guard looked down at his companions who were patrolling the building and shook his body.

In the museum, the remaining security personnel were divided into four groups. They patrolled the various exhibition halls in intervals according to different routes.

In the showroom where Roselle's diary was kept, the Machinery Hivemind squad captain, Max Livermore, wore a monocle that allowed him to directly see wraiths, shadows, and other spirittype monsters. He carried a lantern as he went back and forth to check on the area. Occasionally, he would head to the other halls to check on the situation.

His two subordinates remained in the small hall, next to

Roselle's diary.

However, there was an additional item on the glass display case.

It was a collection of brightly colored blocks that had been pieced together into a miniature layout of the museum's first floor.

This was also a Sealed Artifact. As long as those blocks were pieced into the shape of a corresponding building, they would be able to establish a connection with the real building. Once anyone intruded, its surface would react immediately by shrinking.

Of course, there were quite a few limitations to this. The distance couldn't be too far, and it wouldn't work if the number of blocks it had wasn't enough to piece together the building.

And without external help, it was almost impossible for people or items inside to leave.

"Captain, do you really think someone will steal this notebook? I can't comprehend it at all!" one of the team members asked in a bored tone when he saw Max coming back with his lantern.

Max smiled and said, "Some people adore Roselle with zeal. It's not something you can understand.

"Some of them believe that they can crack it and only need more information for reference. Some of them believe that the symbols contain a mysterious power. As long as they can find the correct combination, they will gain Beyonder powers.

"In previous exhibitions, we would capture such criminals from time to time."

"So that's why we didn't hide the notebook away and placed them in sealed areas? We are waiting for these people to 'surrender' themselves?" another teammate asked with enlightenment.

Max nodded and said, "Who wouldn't want free meritorious deeds?"

...

18 King's Avenue. Outside a building next to a crossroad junction.

Klein followed the shadows and shaded areas, using the Master Key from time to time to walk in a straight line before finally arriving here.

He took out the plain brass key, pointed it at the kitchen door, and turned it silently.

An imperceptible rippling happened as Klein entered the room. All the way through, he saw doors and walls, and without disturbing anyone, he found a storage room.

This Master Key is really useful! However, both of its previous owners lost themselves and entered dangerous spots. It makes me afraid of

continuously carrying it... Klein sighed as he put away the brass key. With the room beside him being the servants' sleeping quarters, he took out Holy Night Powder and released his spirituality to seal off the storage room, making any commotion from within impossible to leak out.

Then, he took out a candle and placed it on a crate in front of him.

Pa! He snapped his finger and produced a light blue spirituality fire on his fingertip.

After the candle wick was lit, he summoned himself using ritualistic magic and then responded to himself above the gray fog.

Less than a minute later, Klein was floating in the room, facing his body whose eyes had lost their luster.

After familiarizing himself with this feeling, he wrapped the ancient and exquisite Azik copper whistle to stabilize his spirit body and made it stronger. It caused a chilly wind to begin to swirl in the room.

At the same time, he also used this power to slightly change the appearance of his illusory spirit body, causing it to appear as if there was a layer of paint on its face.

After doing all of this, Klein took a box of common matches he randomly bought off the streets, cut out a transparent door in the wall of spirituality, and headed out.

"Action time!"

He silently encouraged himself, and just like a real ghost, he passed through the residential buildings, one by one, before successfully arriving outside the Royal Museum.

There was no need to activate his Spirit Vision. In this state, he could clearly see every security personnel, their aura, and emotions which unreservedly betrayed them.

Finding the withered lawn and the iron-black lamppost that faced the hall window, Klein didn't swagger over just because ordinary people couldn't see him. Instead, he followed the shadows and took an elusive route. He passed through the sculpted tree and obstacles before

cautiously arriving at his destination. He stuck close to the wall, as he couldn't guarantee that the security personnel didn't comprise of a member of the Machinery Hivemind.

At this moment, the four security guards on the rooftop, who were carefully inspecting their respective areas of operations, were like blind people. They failed to discover anything.

Klein didn't enter the exhibition hall directly, because his spiritual perception and intuition told him that the museum floor was shrouded in a mysterious power. It also had to do with how he couldn't confirm if there were Beyonders inside.

He followed his plan and circled to another area, to the washroom that was closer to the exhibition hall that housed Roselle's diary. Then, he threw the box of matches he had brought with him through the vent.

Next, he flew up and entered the second floor!

Chapter 321: Appearance of A Living Person

In the exhibition hall where Roselle's diary was kept, the two Machinery Hivemind members suddenly heard a clatter.

At the same time, they turned their heads to look at the Sealed Artifact made out of blocks above the glass display case.

Inside the scaled down model of the museum's first floor, there was a gray dot that was constantly flashing.

"There's a lifeless object in the nearest washroom." One of the team members made a definite judgment.

The other team member relaxed a little, frowned, and said in a guessing tone, "A dead leaf blown in by the wind?"

"It's possible." The team member who spoke first nodded. "Let's wait till the security guards pass by, we'll get them to check and confirm the situation. Captain told us to stay here and not to leave no matter what happens, especially not alone."

In the event of an urgent emergency, they could evacuate with Roselle's notebook.

"Alright." His companion had no objection to his suggestion.

...

In the office area on the second floor of the museum, Klein was like a floating ghost, passing through one wall after another and flying directly above the restored study.

However, he didn't fly too fast. Instead, he continued to sense the fire spark below and kept track of the distance.

When the straight-line distance reached almost thirty meters, he lifted his illusory and translucent right hand and soundlessly snapped his fingers.

In the washroom on the first floor, the box of matches exploded with a soft bang.

Then, a scarlet flame leaped up and ignited a paper towel, a potted plant, and the wooden door.

The flames didn't spread yet, but it was shocking enough.

The nearby security personnel who heard the noise immediately rushed over. In the exhibition hall that was monitoring the entire situation on the first floor, the two Machinery Hivemind members also saw the flames in the model at the same time and subconsciously wanted to rush over there. This was not only an attempt to extinguish the fire, but they were also prepared to capture the troublemaker.

But the moment they took two steps, they stopped, having remembered their Captain's orders:

Don't leave this exhibition hall, don't leave Roselle's notebook, regardless of the situation!

They looked at each other, then they looked warily at the two entrances to the hall before quietly taking out their own Beyonder weapons.

As Beyonders of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, they were never lacking in equipment.

...

At this moment, Max Livermore was patrolling the various exhibition halls on the first floor with a lantern in hand. He had also noticed the commotion and, without thinking, rushed towards the direction of the exhibition hall where Roselle's notebook was located.

The priority to ensure the safety of the items was higher than capturing the intruder!

Moreover, Max believed that no matter what the other party's intentions were, as long as they entered the first floor of the museum and entered any of the halls, they would be under the effect of the Sealed Artifact, and it wouldn't be easy to leave that easily!

If there was no external help, the infiltrator would be trapped inside!

Even if the intruder had a helper, it would still take them quite a bit of time to get rid of the effects.

"Once you enter, you will be like prey that has fallen into a trap!" Max Livermore ran at top speed. After passing through many exhibition halls, he finally saw the silhouettes of his two companions.

At that moment, Klein, who was on the second floor of the museum, had already passed through the doors and walls according to the layout in his memory. He had arrived right above the restored study.

He was in no hurry to carry out any follow-up actions. Instead, he first looked down.

As the stone floor was relatively thick, Klein was unable to vaguely confirm if there were any auras or emotions beneath him. He could only spread his arms wide, fall forward, and silently lie on the ground.

His illusory and transparent figure quickly faded into the ground.

...

On the crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling on the first floor, a faintly discernible human face suddenly appeared.

The strange face overlooked the exhibition hall, its eyes constantly moving, taking in the scenery of every corner in the area.

There are no Beyonders or security personnel... Mumbling to himself, Klein penetrated the ceiling and descended in front of Roselle's glass-covered desk.

He glanced at it, and without hesitation, he reached out with both hands to grab the bookmark in the manuscript of creativity and the bookmark which looked like child's graffiti.

He was trying to prevent a powerful Beyonder, who could reconstruct the scene through magical means, from knowing that he knew which bookmark was abnormal. This was to prevent the investigator from suspecting Miss Justice who had only touched one bookmark.

Augmented by Azik's copper whistle, he passed through the glass case and steadily held the two bookmarks, then he wrapped them within his spirit body.

After finishing this step, Klein's heart calmed down, no longer having any obvious nervousness or tension.

He stretched out his hands again, reaching out for the other bookmarks.

"Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!"

The loud and shrill cry of a baby suddenly reverberated within the exhibition hall.

It was so illusory, as though it came from far, far away.

Klein's body stiffened, freezing all of a sudden like a lake encountering extreme coldness.

In his spirit body state, he appeared to have been frozen!

"Waaa! Waaa! Waaa!"

Along with the cries of the baby were fine black rifts that surrounded Klein like a discontinuous iron fence.

In the blink of an eye, one of the black rifts cracked open, revealing an eyeball filled with blood strands. In the center of the eyeball was a deep pupil, and in it, countless tiny white worms were crawling and squirming.

One, two, three... Black rifts opened successively, and one by one, the bizarre eyeballs were exposed in midair. They stared at Klein in a cold and merciless manner.

As they appeared, everything around them froze in place. Even the illusory spirits were unable to penetrate through them.

It even became hard for Klein to sense the existence of the spirit world. He found it difficult to see the translucent figures that were located infinitely high. He found it hard to see the different colors, the lustrous splendors which contained various types of knowledge.

"Why did you only take the bookmarks?" A soft but unemotional female voice entered Klein's ear.

He froze on the spot and saw a tall bookcase, divided into two levels. The top level almost reached the ceiling, with a staircase and a passage surrounding countless books.

At the top of the stairs sat a figure shrouded by the darkness.

The figure's feet, which wore black leather boots, hung from the wooden stairs as they were suspended in midair.

I actually didn't sense her existence at all... Is she some powerhouse from the Machinery Hivemind? No, she might be a High-Sequence Beyonder! Klein didn't answer; instead, he narrowed his eyes.

"Why did you only take the bookmarks? Where did you learn to only take the bookmarks?"

The figure asked once more. The gentleness had a hint of sternness, and the bloodshot eyeballs surrounding him rapidly widened, as though they wanted to occupy the entire space.

Before she could finish her sentence, Klein revealed a wide smile on his face.

His illusory, nearly translucent figure instantly disappeared, leaving his whereabouts unknown!

Even Azik's copper whistle and the two bookmarks which were wrapped in his spirit body had vanished!

...

Above the gray fog, within the majestic ancient palace.

Klein's figure suddenly appeared at the top of the long, mottled table.

He leaned back into his chair and said with a chuckle, "Fortunately, I was prepared."

The state of his spirit body wasn't part of his Beyonder powers. It didn't originate from the transformation between his physical body and spirit body. This was the result of him summoning himself and responding to his ritual.

And the power of this ritual came from the mysterious space above the gray fog. It stemmed from its special nature!

Hence, as long as Klein succeeded, he wouldn't even need to try to escape. By just ending the summoning directly, he would be able to return to the gray fog and, from here, instantly return to his physical body in the real world!

As the space above the gray fog could block the power of deities like the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator, Klein believed that,

without the interference of deities, the summoning wouldn't be interrupted!

As long as the enemy didn't kill his spirit body or instantly knock him unconscious, Klein had the confidence to escape!

This was also the reason why he didn't want to become a spirit body and still make a "long trek" over to the museum. The more time spent, added even more variables.

...

As the faint and dark crimson moonlight shone in from the window, the woman sitting at the top of the stairs between the bookshelves looked at the desk in silence. She looked at the spot where Klein had been. The surrounding cries of the baby and the eyeballs had disappeared one after another.

After an unknown period of time, the top of the stairs suddenly became empty, as if no one had ever been there before.

In the exhibition hall which housed Roselle's diary, Max Livermore said to his two team members, "Watch this place well. I'll go find the infiltrator.

"He must still be trapped somewhere on the first floor by the power of the Sealed Artifact!"

As he spoke, he looked at the Sealed Artifact, the "model" of the first floor of the museum in a bid to find the red dot which represented the infiltrator and lock onto that person's location.

However, no matter how he looked and counted, something didn't seem right.

The number of people hadn't increased!

"This..." Max Livermore froze where he was.

...

18 King's Avenue, in a certain wealthy merchant's storage room.

Klein's eyes lit up again, and the corners of his mouth curled up.

He left the bookmarks and Azik's copper whistle above the gray fog, and he didn't waste time returning to his body.

After extinguishing the candles and ending the ritual, Klein cleaned up the scene. He used a specially concocted medication to neutralize the smell of the Holy Night Powder and the essential oils from the ritual.

After doing all of this, he dispelled the wall of spirituality, allowing the wind to blow away the remaining traces.

Next, he took out his Master Key, planning to go through buildings before taking a rental carriage a distance away.

Using his cane to determine his direction to prevent himself from getting lost and heading back to the Royal Museum or to a particular cathedral, Klein headed off at a brisk pace, opening the walls and doors that stood in his way with the Master Key.

After walking in a straight line for a while, he suddenly felt like he was unable to determine his position.

Hmm... Two more buildings and I'll be out. If I'm no longer on King's Avenue, I'll get a rental carriage, or I'll make another divination? I'll immediately study the Card of Blasphemy once I'm home! Klein quickly made up his mind. He placed the brass key which was simply shaped against the wall and gently twisted it.

As the formless ripples spread out, he arrived at a neighboring building of the terraces.

At this moment, his nose twitched as he smelled a strong stench of blood.

The strong smell of blood! Klein frowned. He looked up and saw a lady laid out in the living room ahead of him.

The woman's expression was filled with pain. There was a large wound at her abdomen, and her internal organs seemed to have disappeared.

At the same time, Klein heard grunting noises.

The twelfth case!

That Devil serial murderer!

The moment he saw the corpse and heard the sound, Klein's hair stood on end. He knew that he had encountered a bad situation.

Within his line of sight, the living room's decorations were mostly brilliant yellow and bright. There was nothing unusual about the coffee table and sofa. Only the carpet was stained bright red with blood as it slowly soaked through.

On the side of the wound on the female corpse's abdomen, which was completely empty, sat a large sized black dog. Its mouth was half open, revealing many sharp white teeth that sent shivers. On each tooth, there were dark red marks like iron rust. This seemed to be the result of its prolonged consumption of flesh without frequent brushing.

At this moment, the large black dog's teeth were still wrapped around blood-red small intestines, as well as bits and pieces of raw meat.

Its head turned over, and its eyes which resembled magma reflected Klein, who was dressed as a worker, and his disguised face.

"Grunt!" The large black dog let out a roar which sounded like it was showing dominance.

It really is an animal! It's a Sequence 6 Devil, a Devil which is about to advance! And none of the preparations that I made today were for it... These few thoughts instantly flashed through Klein's mind.

Suddenly, the black dog's body expanded rapidly, turning into a two- to three-meter tall monster. On its back, a pair of giant bat wings slowly spread open, and beside its ears, goat horns covered in mysterious patterns grew out.

Red and blue flames leaped from of its luxuriant fur as the strong smell of sulfur followed.

Almost at the same time, Klein stomped on the ground. Instead of retreating, he advanced, swinging his cane as he shot out at the gigantic Devil dog like a cannonball.

Schwing!

The black Devil dog quickly pounced forward. Its sharp claws created afterimages as it swiped at Klein's body.

Without a sound, its claws had penetrated the figure, as if they were piercing through the air!

Klein's figure became faint as it quickly turned transparent.

It was just an illusion!

It was an illusion created by Klein!

At this moment, he had already rolled on the ground and closed in towards the oriel window. Then, with his left hand pressing down, his entire body flew into the air, directly smashing through the glass.

After identifying the enemy, he made up his mind to escape!

Upon seeing this, the eyes of the huge Devil dog immediately lit up like magma, as if there was a raging fire inside.

It opened its mouth, which emitted a putrid smell, and said a word filled with foulness, a word that came from the Devil language, "Die!"
Oof!

Klein's body suddenly stopped, his heart felt as if it was being tightly clenched by an invisible hand.

The figure that was frozen in midair instantly became thin and dim, turning into a crudely cut paper figurine.

And this paper figurine was covered with red rust!

Smash! Clang! Two sounds of indistinguishable order sounded. Klein's figure appeared again, smashing through the oriel window and pouncing towards the stone paved street. The Paper Figurine Substitute slowly floated down as it ignited and emitted the smell of sulfur.

The Devil dog let out a low growl and pounced again, jumping onto the windowsill.

A crimson-blue fireball flew out from its mouth, blasting in the direction of its enemy's escape route.

The moment Klein landed on the ground, he immediately followed up with another roll. The crimson-blue fireball smashed to his side, but it didn't explode immediately, as if it was being affected by an invisible force as though it was being detained.

Boom!

Only after Klein had scrambled a distance away did the fireball expand and explode, shattering the surrounding stone pavements.

Seeing that the Devil dog was about to pursue him, Klein opened his mouth, having prepared for this.

He shouted at the top of his lungs, "Murder! Save me! Murder! Save me!"

His voice seemed to be augmented with special effects. It echoed far and wide through the silent night, waking the residents of the entire street and sending them into the ears of the patrollers who were two streets away.

The giant Devil dog paused in its pouncing posture. After thinking for a second, it retreated back into the room and began to clean up the scene.

Klein's sprinting figure also disappeared under the shouts of "murder" and "save me."

Inside a nearby fireplace that had long since been extinguished, the remnant charcoal suddenly reignited, and an exaggerated flame rose up.

Klein seemed to be performing a magic trick as he appeared out of the flames. With a light leap, he held his cane and jumped out.

Then, he used the Master Key to open the door, tear through walls, and quickly escaped in another direction.

Phew, at a time like this, a scream without Beyonder powers is much more useful than simulating gunshots... Klein sighed as he took out a bottle of Amantha extract and dripped a few drops on himself.

As the original race of the Devil was of the dog species, he had to be wary of its scent-tracking abilities being one of its special powers!

In this way, Klein continued on until he reached another crossjunction. Only then did he stop and look around.

Seeing that it was relatively quiet and unaffected, he hurried to the side of the street and hired a rental carriage.

It was only after the carriage had traveled a certain distance in the night when Klein finally heave a breath of relief. He knew that the Devil wouldn't catch up to him.

This Master Key is really strange... I actually got lost and found myself at the scene of the murder. I have to be a lot more careful when using it in the future... That really was a Devil transformed from an animal... Where did its potions and formulas come from? Does it have a human companion? How did it pick its target for the serial murder?

Hmm, what's gratifying is that after confirming this point, it will be much more difficult for it to commit crimes again, and the probability of getting caught will also greatly increase...

All sorts of thoughts and questions appeared in Klein's mind as the carriage sped along the wide, deserted road which was lined with gas street lamps.

Suddenly, Klein's heart skipped a beat, and an image naturally appeared in his mind.

Pea vines drooped down from the sky and interweaved to form a dense forest. However, the carriage driver didn't seem to notice and continued to drive the carriage across the green vegetation.

No good!

Without hesitation, Klein lunged for the window, about to jump into the street.

Bang! The carriage shook, and he was flung backward.

At the same time, those pea vines really drooped down!

Klein frowned as he attempted to use Flame Controlling to ignite the carriage, but no sound came from his fingers.

At this moment, the surroundings had become abnormally quiet. Even the sounds of the horses' hooves trampling and the rapid rumbling of the wheels over the green vegetation had disappeared.

Klein tried his best to calm himself down as he looked out the window and saw that the carriage had been driven into the air, following the road of pea vines.

No, this isn't Backlund... He narrowed his eyes.

At this moment, the carriage stopped. Outside the window, the pea vines had formed a hammock in the air.

A pair of feet in black leather boots drooped down, and a gentle but emotionless voice entered Klein's ears.

"What were you doing?"

It's that woman inside the museum... She's suspected to be a High-Sequence Beyonder... She doesn't seem to recognize me. After all, I had disguised myself with Azik's copper whistle... She must have heard the cry for help and came over to check... Klein's thoughts were abnormally active at that moment.

He deliberately gulped and said, "I'm a private detective. Many friends and I are investigating the recent serial murders.

"I have a mystical item called the 'Master Key.' It can open doors and let me pass through walls, but it will cause the holder to get lost.

"It was during this process that I ran into the scene of the crime. Because I wasn't the murderer's opponent, I could only shout for help while running."

Everything I said was the truth... Klein silently added in his heart.

After he finished speaking, there was temporarily no response from the outside. However, he felt that a gaze had penetrated the carriage, passed through the obstructions, and was directly inspecting the items on his body.

Fortunately, I left Azik's copper whistle and the bookmarks above the gray fog just in case... At that moment, Klein was very glad.

Caution and carefulness were indeed useful!

After the indescribable and torturous silence, the gentle but emotionless female voice finally sounded again.

“That key has a certain curse. It must not be used unless absolutely necessary.”

As soon as she finished her sentence, the surroundings changed completely. Everything—the pea vines, the road through the forest, the road to the sky—had all disappeared. The carriage continued on the streets, driving between the elegant iron-black gas street lamps.

Klein remained on tenterhooks until the carriage arrived near East Borough, where he paid the fare of 8 soli.

Under normal circumstances, a rental carriage wouldn’t enter any of East Borough streets because it was likely to be robbed.

In one of the rooms on Black Palm Street, Klein changed his clothes and went straight to sleep. He didn’t attempt to return to Minsk Street before midnight. The twelfth murder had just occurred, and it would only serve to make Backlund’s situation tenser.

He didn’t immediately go above the gray fog to study the secret of the “bookmark.” He acted just as he had described himself to the mysterious woman. He was a Low-Sequence Beyonder, a private investigator with some Beyonder powers.

Tonight sure was filled with surprises. It was rather thrilling. All I did was steal something... Yes, most of the problems can be blamed on the Master Key... Klein made a self-deprecating comment and quickly fell asleep.

The next morning, he breathed in the choking smog as he slowly strolled home and picked up the newspapers and letters from his mailbox.

After opening the door, he casually flipped opened the newspaper to take a look and found that the headline was as he had expected: “The twelfth case!”

“The Devil has appeared again. The police have declared that they have locked onto the murderer!”

...

As for the theft of the objects in the Royal Museum, it was only mentioned in an inconspicuous location. In fact, the article didn’t even mention what the stolen object was.

The unstamped letter that came with the newspaper was a water bill that Klein had to pay for himself. He glanced at it and casually threw it on the coffee table. He then returned to the second floor to heat up water for a bath.

He waited until the water vapor filled the bathroom before he seized the opportunity to take four steps counterclockwise to enter the space above the gray fog.

Inside the immutable ancient palace, Klein sat down and picked up the bookmark that depicted the figure of Emperor Roselle.

It really wasn’t easy getting you! He gently caressed the surface of the cardboard and silently sighed.

The bookmark was, on the surface, nothing special. Roselle's portraits had been placed everywhere around the exhibition hall, and the image depicted was from the period when he was middle-aged.

Klein kept flipping the bookmark repeatedly, in scrutiny, and found a tiny puncture, thereby confirming that this was the bookmark which Miss Justice had verified.

He tried to spread his spirituality, and he slowly injected it inside. However, just like with ordinary objects, his spirituality only flowed and failed to permeate it, nor did it cause any abnormal changes.

That's right, Roselle had the intention of finding someone who was fated, so he wouldn't specifically restrict it to Beyonders... Klein thought for a moment, then said softly in Feysac, "Pirate King!" The bookmark still didn't respond.

He tried the words in ancient Feysac, Intis, Loen, and other languages again, but the result was the same.

As for Jotun, Elvish, Dragonese, and other languages from the mysticism domain, Klein could only try them out of hope since they was overly restrictive and unlikely to be the language used.

Without a doubt, he failed.

Immediately following that, Klein used Feysac again as he translated, "One Piece!"

The bookmark lay quietly on his palm, showing no sign of abnormality.

Klein tried the steps he did from before, using different languages again, but he was constantly met with failure.

It seems that my initial guess was wrong. The young Roselle might've used the meme of Pirate King to make a joke, but he might not necessarily do that when he was older. People will ultimately grow old and change. Klein reflected over his mistake as he tapped the edge of the long, mottled table with his finger, trying hard to infer from the bits of information that the diary had provided to unlock the bookmark.

After a while, he took out a pen and paper, and he wrote down his thought process so as to avoid any confusion or contradictions.

While doing this, Roselle was definitely maniacal and in despair. It also clearly showcases his warped humor. "The fated ones will receive it" is proof considering how it doesn't suit the world's lingo at present.

Therefore, I can be certain that he really wanted someone to discover the uniqueness of the Cards of Blasphemy by chance.

In that case, the unlocking method can't be too unimaginable, or something that will often appear in daily life.

What Roselle required was a coincidence. For example, when someone holds the worthless bookmark and randomly says a specific word, then, congratulations, you have obtained a fortuitous opportunity! Yes, this is very in line with his warped humor.

Going by this logical train of thought, different Cards of Blasphemy should have different unlocking incantations. Using a single term to unlock all the Cards of Blasphemy clearly isn't congruent with Roselle's style.

What is the incantation for unlocking this card? Well, the first things that can be ruled out are the words that are commonly used, words that are said all the time.

Also, when creating the Cards of Blasphemy, Roselle's state was in despair, maniacal, unwilling to part with it, reminiscent, struggling, and angry. I can try to immerse myself in that state of mind and imagine myself to be Roselle at that point in time. I can imagine what kind of incantation I would have used.

Klein stopped writing and began acting as Roselle in a bid to find some inspiration.

He first tried out vulgarities in different languages, including ancient Feysac, as well as terms pertaining to hope, but unfortunately, was rewarded with failure.

Immediately after, he tried to figure out what would be the last thing a desperate powerhouse would be reluctant to part.

His wife, Matilda? Such a licentious guy shouldn't have such deep feelings for his first wife.

His children? The eldest daughter, Bernadette; the eldest son, Ciel; and the second son, Bornova...

According to the diary, the person he can't get over the most was his daughter, Bernadette, who might become an important figure in the mysterious world.

Klein paused, took a breath, and prepared to try again.

"Bernadette," he said in the Intis language.

The bookmark didn't respond.

Klein switched to the languages of Loen, Highlander, and Feysac, but still failed to achieve the desired results.

He sighed and said with a deep voice which corresponded to ancient Feysac, "Bernadette."

This name echoed in the empty and quiet gray fog like it was nothing special. Just as Klein was about to search for new inspiration, he suddenly felt the bookmark in his hand sink!

It immediately turned into an invisible whirlpool which wildly absorbed Klein's mental energies.

For an ordinary person, this was a huge burden, but for a Sequence 7 Magician, it wasn't especially draining. Klein easily survived this hurdle and couldn't conceal his joy as he looked at the object in his palm.

A bright light emitted, bit by bit, from the bookmark, and the image of Emperor Roselle on the outside was being replaced by an entirely new image.

He was sitting on an ancient stone throne as he wore a black crown embedded with various precious stones on his head. He wore pitch-black armor, and a cape of the same color was draped over his body. He held a scepter, and he looked forward with cold, aloof eyes.

On the upper-left corner of the bookmark, there was a line of text condensed from the bright radiance of stars.

“Sequence 0, Black Emperor!”

Sequence 0! Indeed, the secrets of the gods are hidden within! The Black Emperor is actually Sequence 0... Klein thought with a smile, half sighing and half surprised.

Soon after, the bookmark became three-dimensional, like a miniature book.

The book moved without the wind, revealing a Roselle in a white hood. Beside it was a corresponding description in ancient Feysac.

“Sequence 9, Lawyer.

“Good at discovering and using loopholes in the rules and the weaknesses of their opponents. Possesses excellent eloquence and reasoning skills...

“Potion formula...”

Klein glanced at the formula ingredients but didn’t look carefully. He reached out his hand and touched it, making the book flip to the next page.

“Sequence 8, Barbarian.

“Problems that cannot be solved by the law will be solved by force. This is also one of the rules... The Beyonders at this Sequence have a high resistance to psychological influences...

“Potion formula...”

As Klein touched it, the book conjured from the Card of Blasphemy flipped through one page at a time.

“Sequence 7, Briber.”

...

“Sequence 6, Baron of Corruption.”

...

“Sequence 5, Mentor of Disorder.”

...

“Sequence 4, Earl of The Fallen.”

...

“Sequence 3, Frenzied Mage.”

...

“Sequence 2, Duke of Entropy.”

...

“Sequence 1, Prince of Abolition.”

...

“Sequence 0, Black Emperor.”

...

After skimming through the book, Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

This really hides the profound secrets of becoming a God!

It’s no wonder all of the High-Sequence Beyonders who tread this pathway will attempt to establish their own kingdoms, and walk the lands.

It’s because the ritual of becoming a god requires it!

To advance from Sequence 1, the Prince of Abolition, to Black Emperor, the necessary ritual requires one to possess their own country, linking their name to the title of Emperor, making it common knowledge among the populace. Furthermore, one needed to establish a set of strict and complicated rules that defied normality, including architectural styles.

Then, they would spur on their citizens to secretly establish nine mausoleums that were similar to pyramids. After which, they would enter one of the mausoleums. With a large majority of the citizens who would be scattered across different cities in corresponding sacrificial rituals involved, the Prince of Abolition would imbibe the Sequence 0 potion.

Once the advancement was successful, the Black Emperor wouldn't truly die until all the nine secret mausoleums were destroyed. Even if "He" was annihilated, "He" would still be able to awaken and return from one of the mausoleums.

What was even more terrifying was that even if the deity was successfully killed and all nine mausoleums destroyed, as long as a certain amount of the order set up by that deity remained, it was still possible for "Him" to mysteriously revive. It appeared to be a loophole against death.

The best way to completely obliterate "Him" was for a new Black Emperor to appear!

"This is a deity!

"Mortals cannot fight against deities; same for angels.

"Those who have yet to become deities will never be able to fathom the power of deities."

Roselle exposited with deep implications at the end.

In addition, Klein also knew one thing, once there was a True God with a Sequence 0, it was impossible for a Sequence 1 Beyonder to appear. If there was no Sequence 0, then, in the same way, there would be at most three Sequence 1 Beyonders. This was a result of the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation!

According to the Black Emperor Card of Blasphemy's description of the 10 Sequences, Klein could clearly see that the greatest feature of this pathway was the shadow of it gradually evolving into order!

Roselle also mentioned that if one had that Card of Blasphemy in hand after advancing to a High-Sequence Beyonder, the card would have a subtle reaction to the Beyonder ingredients that the person needed!

Of course, it was limited to High-Sequence Beyonders of the Black Emperor pathway.

What a pity, this is of no use to me. Klein looked at the Card of Blasphemy thin down again, turning back into a poker card.

However, it was no longer in disguise. On the surface, it depicted Roselle sitting on a stone throne—Sequence 0 Black Emperor!

Klein remained silent for a few seconds before he sighed silently.

This card's biggest use to me is to exchange the formulas for the items I need. There's also some information about deities and Sequences. Apart from that, there's almost no other use for it.

Heh, at the very least, as the leader of the Tarot Club and as The Fool, I will no longer be an empty shell. I now hold one path of the divine, and it's not like I can't produce a High-Sequence Beyonder formula anymore!

Yes... I remember that at the Beyonder gathering organized by Old Mister "Eye of Wisdom," the lady who is suspected to have an Artisan backing her has been always seeking to purchase the potion formula of Barbarian.

As his mind whirled, Klein took another look at the Roselle portrait on the Black Emperor card and couldn't help laughing.

He has made every Sequence in his own image. What a narcissist...

I'm suddenly very curious what the Card of Blasphemy for the Demoness pathway would look like. Hehe.

Reining in his thoughts, Klein destroyed the other bookmark he had casually picked up and discovered that it was just an ordinary bookmark.

After doing all of this, he changed his seating posture and leaned back into his chair. He responded to Miss Justice's plea from last night and said calmly, "That was a Card of Blasphemy made by Roselle."

Chapter 324: Imagined and Real "Adorer"

Empress Borough, Earl Hall's home, dining room.

As per usual tradition, Audrey was saying grace with her father, mother, and elder brother before dinner.

"Praise the Goddess!" She tapped her chest in four spots in a clockwise manner to end the prayer.

However, before she finished speaking, her vision was covered by a thick gray fog. A distant figure that seemed to be looking down at everyone and everything opened his mouth with dominance.

"That was a Card of Blasphemy made by Roselle."

Mr. Fool... Card of Blasphemy? Audrey, who finally received a response, was joyful at first, but then she fell into a daze. She couldn't understand what the so-called Card of Blasphemy referred to.

However, she quickly made a guess. She had always known that Emperor Roselle had made a secret deck of cards representing some unknown force which had twenty-two cards in total. It was believed to have been referenced from tarot cards.

Furthermore, she had also heard from The Hanged Man that the secret to the deck of cards was that they hid the paths of the divine, the path to becoming a god!

So it's called a Card of Blasphemy... It corresponds to the Blasphemy Slate... This is definitely a treasure of the highest level in the mysterious world!

The paths of the divine!

It's no wonder that Mr. Fool's Blessed had to ask for help. He wanted to ensure that the card was the real one before taking action. It was to prevent a mistake from happening. Instead of getting the right target, it might end up informing the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery that a particular bookmark hides a Card of Blasphemy.

I wonder if he succeeded...

The Beyonders from the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery haven't come to make any routine inquiries. Perhaps, he's still making plans...

As her body trembled faintly, Audrey once again saw a figure praying inside the thick fog, an extremely blurry figure.

He was saying respectfully, "The Great Fool, please convey my gratitude to the authenticator. This allowed my operation to go smoothly.

"For that, I'm willing to raise the reward to 3,000 pounds which can be deducted from the 5,000 pounds that haven't been paid yet. This is the share that the other party deserves."

He succeeded? He succeeded just like that? But when I looked at the front pages of those newspapers, there was no news of the theft at the exhibition. It was all news of the twelfth victim of the serial murder... Raising the reward to 3,000 pounds implies that Mr. Fool's Blessed had indeed succeeded in retrieving the bookmark containing the Card of Blasphemy without anyone noticing! How cool! Although the term invented by Emperor Roselle may not be elegant, reserved, or in line with my identity as a noble identity, it's the only impression that I feel right now!

Our Tarot Club now has a complete path of the divine in its control!

It should be a complete one, right?

I wonder which one it is.

But regardless, this represents the path to becoming a god!

Under the glory of Mr. Fool, we will one day become the most powerful hidden faction in the world!

I wonder if the other bookmarks hide Cards of Blasphemy...

Audrey controlled her excitement as she felt longing and pride. She allowed the dining maid to help her spread out a napkin before her gaze shifted to Earl Hall, who habitually read the newspapers while having breakfast.

"Father, is there anything worth paying attention to today?"

Earl Hall sighed and said, “That devil has killed another innocent person. It’s the 12th case. She’s a fashion designer who had just become famous. She had only been a street girl a few times due to her desperate need for money, but she ended up encountering such a terrible situation.

“Thankfully, there was an eyewitness. The person witnessed the devil at the crime scene. Heh, he was really scared out of his wits. He constantly shouted on the streets ‘murder’ and ‘save me.’ Heh heh. I have to say that his cries for help did bring acceptable results. The devil didn’t chase after him.

“As a result, the police have locked onto the suspect and are hunting him down.”

Audrey drew the crimson moon on her chest once again and said, “May their operation succeed.

“Father, from what you just said, it sure was a horrible but funny scene.

“I hope that eyewitness won’t have nightmares because of it.”

And on the same night, Mr. Fool’s Blessed took one of the Cards of Blasphemy from the heavily protected museum without alerting anyone... Audrey added wistfully in her mind and filled in some of the details herself.

...

Royal Museum, in the restored study.

“Are you sure that only two bookmarks were stolen?” the Machinery Hivemind squad’s Captain Max Livermore asked his team members.

As he spoke, he stole a glance at the important figure standing in front of the desk with his back facing him.

It was an old man wearing a white clerical robe and a clerical cap. He was the head of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery for the Backlund diocese. He was a member of the Divine Council, Archbishop Horamick Haydn.

This important figure wasn't only a clergyman, but he was also a very famous scientist, a distinguished professor of physics at Backlund University.

"Yes, only two bookmarks were stolen," The team member being questioned answered with certainty.

Max nodded slightly and looked at Horamick Hayden. After some thought, he deliberated and asked, "Your Grace, after the closing of the museum yesterday evening, some aristocratic children came to visit. They had touched parts of the exhibited items, including one of the two bookmarks that were stolen. Do I need to get them to cooperate with the investigation?"

"I know about that." Horamick's hands naturally drooped down as he turned around and said in a calm tone, "I've already confirmed that those aristocratic children are not related to the thief who stole the bookmarks, so there's no need to get them to cooperate with the investigation."

"Yes, Your Grace." Max himself didn't think there was anything wrong with the aristocratic children, not to mention that Archbishop Haydn had enough mysticism knowledge and

Beyonder techniques to confirm it.

Horamick's gentle and benevolent face didn't show the slightest trace of anger. He looked around and said, "There was more than one person here last night, at least two of them. They were divided into two opposing groups.

"One of them might even be of a higher Sequence than me, while the other had somehow escaped mysteriously.

"Although I'm unable to reconstruct the entire scene, there are still some things that I can 'see.'

"This matter is more complicated than we thought." At this point, he sighed.

"I also know why they wanted to steal the bookmarks. "We've been tricked by Roselle for more than 150 years..."

...

Giving up 3,000 pounds sure does hurt. I've saved up for so long and yet, I have less than 1,000 pounds... However, the Card of Blasphemy is a priceless treasure that cannot be exchanged, even with money. The contribution Miss Justice had made in this matter is definitely worth the price...

Thankfully, I could deduct it from what she owes me, lightening my burden. If I ever meet Mr. Azik in the future, I'll pay him the 15,000 pounds that belong to the "Blessed" with a High-Sequence Beyonder formula... I wonder what the other Cards of Blasphemy were disguised to look like. According to the personality of the Emperor, they should all be rather surprising... After Klein finished his reply and looked out the palace at the sea of gray fog, he silently sighed.

As a precaution, he temporarily left his Black Emperor card above the gray fog, on the surface of the long bronze table facing the seat of The Fool. He did so for Azik's copper whistle as well.

When he returned to the real world, he held a ritual again and summoned himself to throw the Master Key, a Sealed Artifact which was an amalgamation of getting lost and having bad luck, above the gray fog. Although it didn't seem to have huge negative effects, it was enough to cause one to encounter life-threatening situations. He planned not to use it unless necessary.

The Master Key is just a relic of an unlucky fellow who had just advanced to Sequence 9. Yet, it has a negative influence that even a Mid-Sequence Beyonder is unable to weaken... It seems like there's an additional factor in the reason why the Apprentice lost control, which led to something abnormal...

Now that I think about it, my previous decision was correct. To explore 32 Verdi Street south of the bridge, I need to be careful and be prepared.... Yes, I need to be aware of something. A Sealed Artifact's effects might not be completely related to the owner's Sequence. I have to consider multiple factors, such as whether or not it has been contaminated by an evil god...

Klein took a bath with the water that had already turned cold before walking out of the bathroom, refreshed. He went downstairs to enjoy the corn pancakes he had bought on his way back. They were delights of the Feynapotter Kingdom's Highlands —crispy, fragrant, and sweet.

After he had eaten his fill, he went through his experiences from last night to see if he had left any clues behind.

Even with the Master Key, if I'm not a Beyonder, it's impossible for me to escape from the hands of a Devil. Back then, the mysterious and powerful lady must've determined that I wasn't an ordinary private detective. I also didn't have any intention of hiding that point.

By not capturing me, this implies that she's either an official Beyonder who is friendly to wild Beyonders, or she's not a member of the three Churches or the military. Yes, I'm more inclined with the latter point. The former point would most likely have her confiscate the Master Key. Sigh, back then, I was almost on the brink of despair. I thought I would be detained in the underground prison of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery like ordinary Beyonders. I even began considering my prison break. Who would've known that she would just leave.

Which organization is she from? Or is she wild? No, for wild Beyonders to reach her level of power, they must have an organization of their own.

That Devil dog would definitely use its Beyonder powers to erase clues related to itself, and that naturally includes me. In the field of mysticism, there is no way to separate them, and that lady probably can't be exposed as well. From the looks of it, the clues that I left behind while escaping had most likely have been interfered with.

As for what happened in the museum, they will be searching for a special spirit body, a strange existence, and what has that got to do with me, Sherlock Moriarty? Klein mocked himself as his heart grew calmer.

Of course, he had dared to return home because he had divined it in advance. It was just like he was unafraid that the museum contained traps that he found completely unsolvable.

Phew, this matter has come to an end... What should I do today? Practice my Beyonder powers and go to the Quelaag Club to scrounge a meal in passing? Well, I don't know if the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers have identified the murderer or not. Why don't I write another letter to Isengard Stanton and give myself a hint? As his thoughts raced, Klein heard someone from outside approach before leaving.

Another letter? He opened the door in puzzlement, and indeed, he saw a letter lying in his mailbox.

The letter was from Isengard Stanton.

When he returned to the living room, Klein picked up a letter opener and opened the envelope before taking out Isengard Stanton's letter.

The famous detective wrote:

"Your idea has greatly helped us. Please allow me to thank you here first.

"After receiving your letter, we immediately organized some people to sweep through crucial areas. As expected, we found some clues, and quite a few stray animals that had frequently appeared and were remembered by the residents had disappeared.

"In the process, we also noticed an interesting thing. Four years ago, in the serial murder case, yes—the targets were single prostitutes with a child. Quite a few people living near the scene of the crime had mentioned that although the most suspicious teenager was eccentric and vicious, he was quite fond of animals, especially a large black dog.

"After the boy died in the gang firefight, the people who lived around him never saw the dog again.

"I'm curious. Who is its current owner? Was it the murderer of some unsolved serial murder case from even further back?

"The above facts have all been proven to be true at the scene of the 12th murder case, and it has played a key role in giving the police a preliminary idea of the suspect. If all goes well, and the culprit is arrested, we will be able to get the majority of the reward money.

"My friend, I clearly remember your contribution. I will not forget your share."

...

Isengard Stanton seems to suspect that I knew the truth about the Devil, so he had deliberately hinted at something? Klein put down the letter and mumbled silently.

However, this letter also made him feel relieved.

The official Beyonders weren't looking for the wrong person!

If the gigantic Devil dog didn't get receive any additional help, then it was only a matter of time before it was caught and killed.

As for Isengard Stanton's prediction that there was another master, Klein didn't have enough evidence to confirm the matter, so it could only be said that there was a certain probability.

In short, my mission ends here. The job is now left to the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind squads. Klein pulled out a fresh sheet of paper, picked up a fountain pen, and replied Isengard Stanton with a letter filled with humility. He also ignored his subtle hints like a real, ordinary private detective.

After cutting another paper figurine and sending the letter, Klein strolled to the public carriage stop to wait. He thought in a relaxed manner, *The next thing to do is wait for the money...*

Leppard said he would be visiting the Roselle Memorial Exhibition for three days straight. I'll have to wait until Saturday before visiting to find him and make the final payment. Hopefully, the patent for the bicycle will be filed by then. Sigh, the Backlund Patent Office seems to be known for its inefficiency.

Klein had already made plans for the day. Since there was no Beyonder gathering, resulting in him being unable to buy the appropriate items, he suddenly had a lot of free time. He didn't need to busy himself for a short period of time.

In the morning, I'll go to the Quelaag Club, practice my marksmanship, practice my Beyonder powers, have lunch there, and then find a better circus to observe the magician's performance and see if I can get some inspiration. He took out his golden pocket watch and looked at it. He boarded the public carriage in a good mood.

...

Hillston Borough, Quelaag Club.

Since Klein came by at least twice a week, the attendants remembered him and didn't require him to show his proof of membership or his Frost constellation badge.

It was Wednesday morning, and since most of the Quelaag Club's members belonged to the middle-class, where they still had fixed and decent jobs, it was difficult for them to visit the club unless it was Sunday, tea time, or when they took time off from work.

The spacious and bright hall seemed abnormally empty. There were only a few people sitting in the corner where the coffee tables and sofas were.

Glancing around, Klein spotted an acquaintance and went up to greet him, "Talim, with such terrific weather today, you should be at the turf club."

The acquaintance was Talim, the aristocratic equestrian teacher who had introduced him to the club at the request of Mrs. Mary Dumont. He had once brought Klein business—the protection of Daily Observer reporter Mike Joseph on his trip to the Golden Rose for investigations.

Talim looked up, touched his short brown curls, and smiled.

"Oh my, it's the honorable great detective. What have you been up to? I haven't seen you in a long time."

That's because you haven't been to the club for days... Klein smiled as he sat on the sofa next to Talim.

"I've been helping the police with the serial murder case. Although it might not necessarily yield any results, the reward is tempting enough. Besides, establishing good relations with the police is very important for us private investigators."

What I just said was bragging. I'm just an unremarkable character who'd been summoned... he mocked himself inwardly.

Among the few members sitting in the same sofa area behind them, a man who appeared to be a stockbroker initiated a discussion on the latest Western Railway shares and East Balam Plantation shares.

Talim didn't doubt Klein's answer. He chuckled and said, "This is indeed something that will busy a great detective."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he gradually entered a pensive state.

Just as Klein was about to bid him farewell and leave for the underground shooting range, Talim suddenly looked at him and said, “Mr. Moriarty, may I ask you a question?

“Uh, you can charge me a consultation fee.”

“This one is free. Also, just call me Sherlock.” Klein laughed.

Talim nodded gently and said hesitantly, “I have a friend who has fallen in love with someone he shouldn’t have. How should he deal with such a situation?”

Although I had always believed that anyone who asks a question prefaced with “I have a friend” basically means “I myself,” Talim’s emotional colors implies that it’s not for himself. He’s in a dilemma, but I can’t see any traces of pain... After activating his Spirit Vision, Klein leaned back slightly, clasped his hands, and said, “I’m sorry, but I’m not a psychiatrist or any of the experts in the newspapers or magazines who are good at solving emotional problems.

“My only advice is not to break the law.

“Heh heh, that was a joke. First, we need to understand how this ‘shouldn’t have’ arose. Is there a feud between the family?”

Talim glanced at him and said in resignation, “No, this isn’t Romeo and Juliet!”

Upon hearing Talim’s reply, Klein seemed to hear an illusory murmur in his ears.

Author: Roselle Gustav... Author: Roselle Gustav... Author: Roselle Gustav...

Shaking his head, he apologized to Shakespeare and smiled.

“This piece of work by Emperor Roselle is just too classic. When it comes to love that shouldn’t be, I can’t help but think of it.

“Then why shouldn’t they be together?”

Talim fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I have to keep it confidential. I’m sorry, just pretend I didn’t ask.”

Confidential? That must be someone with certain standing... In love with someone of the same sex? In love with someone who is related by blood? Klein held back his curiosity and said with his hands spread out, “Then I can only give you one more suggestion. Read best-sellers about passionate love like Stormwind Mountain Villa and Love and Jealousy.”

Talim quivered his lips a few times, sighed, and said, “Sigh, that can only be used as the last resort. In my opinion, the feelings present in those best-selling novels simply don’t seem to occur among normal people.”

“I think so too!” Klein echoed in full agreement.

After exchanging a smile with Talim, he got up and went to the underground shooting range to practice his shooting and Beyonder powers. When it was almost noon, he returned to the first floor and went straight to the buffet cafeteria.

He had noticed earlier that the cuisine that was in limited supply today was red wine fried foie gras, paired with sliced apples and bread soaked in butter.

After taking his food, Klein carried his tray to the table where Talim was sitting. At that moment, there was another acquaintance of his, who, by the same token, had recommended his membership. He was the surgeon, Aaron Ceres.

Before he could sit down after setting the tray down, Klein noticed a crutch leaning against the chair of the famous surgeon.

“Aaron, what’s wrong?” he asked with concern.

The tall and thin man wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses and had a cold appearance. He lightly patted his right leg and said, “No, don’t mention it. It’s really bad luck! I fell down the stairs and suffered rather serious fractures, so I could only fix it with a plaster.”

“You really were unlucky.” Klein sighed in agreement, cut a piece of foie gras, dipped it in sauce, and put it in his mouth. The fragrance that was emitted the moment they melted in his mouth stimulated all of his taste buds.

“I’ve been out of luck for a long time.” Aaron nudged his spectacle frames and rubbed his temples in passing.

He then looked at Klein, then at Talim before asking hesitantly, “Mr. Moriarty, do you—do you...” “What?” Klein looked up.

Aaron lowered his voice.

“You’re a famous detective. You should know a lot of people, right?”

“It’s quite alright,” Klein didn’t understand what Aaron was up to as he answered perfunctorily.

Aaron looked at Talim again and took a deep breath.

“Do you know anyone who’s like a village witch doctor? No, I mean, some of the more capable fortune-tellers or mysticism enthusiasts. I think... I feel that my recent string of bad luck is too abnormal...

“I know it’s likely to be a fake or a scam, but there’s no other way of shirking my bad luck. I’ve tried to go to church, praying, donating, attending Mass, but it didn’t work at all.”

Capable fortune-teller and mysticism enthusiast... You seem to be talking about me... Klein pondered and said, “Aaron, tell us in detail about what happened to you.”

By his side, Talim nodded as well.

“Don’t worry, I may be a believer of the Lord, but I don’t reject things regarding mysticism.” Aaron sighed in distress.

“There are a lot of things. For example, making mistakes at the operating table. Encountering an accident on the steam locomotive. I found that my house had been burgled when I returned home. When I went to the hospital, I ended up falling down the stairs... Do you think someone has cursed me?”

Yes, I’ve heard Aaron mention something like this before... Klein frowned slightly.

As a former Nighthawk, it was easy for him to associate this description with a Sealed Artifact: Misfortune Cloth Puppet!

Could it be a similar item? He activated his Spirit Vision and asked seriously, “Aaron, think back carefully. Before those unfortunate events began happening, one after another, did you or your family—yes, your family—encounter any unfortunate events?”

Klein had wanted to ask if Aaron or his family had brought home anything which was relatively more unusual—such as a slightly dirty rag doll—before the unlucky events befell him.

But as soon as the words reached his mouth, he suddenly felt that it was too direct and could easily expose the fact that he knew a lot about mysticism. Although this could be explained away by the fact that he was experienced and knowledgeable, there was no need for him to take the risk.

Instead, he took a more roundabout approach and asked Dr. Aaron if his family had suffered the same ill luck.

Upon hearing his question, Aaron Ceres carefully recalled and said, "No, except for the steam locomotive accident that occurred to them as well, they were the same as before. Most of the time, they didn't experience anything especially lucky or unlucky. The rest can be said to be of both types, so they can't be considered especially unlucky."

That's not right... If it was an item that needs to be sealed like the Misfortune Cloth Puppet, it would definitely affect people within a certain range... Could it be that Aaron has dripped his blood on it, and the two of them have established a firm connection? In Klein's Spirit Vision, Aaron's aura and mood matched his physical and mental state, and there was nothing special about him.

He asked after some thought, "Is there any colleague at the hospital that is as unlucky as you?"

"No, so I think I must've been cursed by someone." Aaron pulled at his bow tie, looking anxious and uneasy.

Under Talim's curious gaze, Klein thought for a moment and said, "Before you became unlucky, did you encounter any relatively stranger matters, such as cutting yourself? In folklore, blood is the powerful medium through which curses can be formed."

"After I suspected that I was cursed, I have confirmed this point. I have not lost any blood in the past three months," Aaron replied with a heavy mood as he held his knife and fork.

That's a little strange... I can't perform a more complicated divination in front of them... Klein asked again, "Then, were there other strange matters?"

"Aaron, think back carefully. This kind of matter can't happen without a reason. Have you offended anyone recently? Or have you become an obstacle towards others?" Talim echoed with concern.

Aaron looked down at the food on the plate and fell into deep thought. Klein didn't stay idle either. He took care of his food before it turned cold and unpleasant.

By the time he started enjoying the dessert, Aaron finally raised his head and said, "I'm not a very sociable person. I don't have a good relationship with my colleagues, but it's hard to believe that they would come up with a way to curse me.

"Well... After your reminder, I do remember something. It might be related to mysticism."

"What is it?" Klein and Talim's spirits were lifted at the same time.

"Before my continuous bad luck streak, I was in charge of a patient, a child who wasn't even ten years old. He was very pitiful. Due to some complications, I had to amputate his left leg." Aaron nudged his glasses and recalled. "I just became a father not long ago, so I'm always filled with sympathy for the misfortune of a child. Every time I check the ward, I would chat with him, encourage him, and comfort him."

After a pause, Aaron's thoughts turned more fluid.

"I remember that it was the day before his surgery. I specially went to his ward to look for him, and he was really upset. He was playing tarot cards, which he had brought with him when he was admitted to the hospital. His family wasn't even allowed to take them away.

"In order to calm him down, I began playing tarot cards with him.

"Back then, I drew a card. It was the reversed Wheel of Fortune.

"That child looked at me and said with a pure and innocent smile, 'Doctor, your luck will get worse.'"

“Doctor, your luck will get worse...” Talim drew a breath and said, “Why do I feel that such a scene and such words make my body feel cold... Did the child die on the operating table?”

Aaron shook his head.

“That operation was a success. It didn’t take long for him to be discharged from the hospital. He even specially thanked me.

“So, I’ve never suspected this, but now that I think back, I find that this is the only time in the past two months that I have come into contact with something related to mysticism. No matter what, regardless of whether it is useful or not, tarot cards are still used for divination.”

At some point, a brass coin had appeared in Klein’s hand. It was bouncing and rolling at his fingertips, seemingly symbolizing the analysis process of a “famous detective.”

The coin was flicked up and fell into the palm of his hand. Klein glanced at it out of the corner of his eye and asked, having “ended” his thinking, “What’s that boy’s name? Where does he live?”

Aaron answered without hesitation, “His name is Will Auceptin. As for where he lives, I don’t remember.

“What is your suggestion, Mr. Detective?

“Do you know any experts in the field of mysticism?”

Klein took a sip of his black tea and said with a smile under the expectant gazes of Aaron and Talim, “My suggestion is to go to the cathedral of the deity you believe in, tell the bishop about your recent misfortune, and then ask him if he has a solution. Aaron, I remember you were a believer of, uh—the Evernight Goddess, right?”

He had almost said Goddess, but fortunately, he remembered his identity as a detective who believed in the God of Steam and Machinery.

“However, my prayers to the Goddess, my participation in Mass, and the donation of money and items were all useless. I think I should find some capable fortune-tellers.” Aaron didn’t agree with Detective Moriarty’s suggestion.

Talim echoed with a nod, "Yes, the deities wouldn't care if you were lucky or not. Luck is a blessing, and misfortune is a test."

Friend, your faith isn't pious enough. Be careful, the Lord of the Storms might zap you with a lightning bolt... Klein looked at the two separately and laughed.

"This suggestion is based on very simple logic.

"If—and I mean if—there exists useful and effective mysticism in this world, then the ones who are best at it are definitely the seven Orthodox Churches. If not, they would've long been replaced by other forces who have mastered mysticism.

"If there isn't such a thing as true mysticism, then finding a fortune-teller or witchdoctor won't be of any help. It would be better to see if there's a solution to this problem with the help of a relatively higher-ranking bishop."

Aaron carefully analyzed the situation and finally nodded.

"That makes sense.

"Perhaps I will need the bishop's help to pass on the message to the Goddess to protect me."

No, accurately speaking, with the bishop passing on the message, the Nighthawks would be able to notice the abnormality on you... Klein retorted inwardly.

He had no intention of helping Aaron himself, because to solve the problem regarding luck, aside from finding the root cause of everything, he would have to set up particular rituals.

Ignoring the fact that Klein didn't know any real luck enhancement rituals, and even if he did, he would be exposing his Beyonder powers to someone he was unfamiliar with, which would increase the risk for no reason.

Since I can get the Nighthawks to take up the role of helping you, there's no need for me to do it myself... I just don't know if the problem came from that boy or the tarot cards in his hands. If it's the latter, then it

might be a suitable Sealed Artifact for me... Klein shook his head, suppressing his greed and emotions.

At this moment, Aaron had already made up his mind. He looked at Klein and grinned.

"Thank you, Mr. Moriarty. Although you don't know mysticism, you relied on strict logic to provide the best suggestion." *Yes, I don't know mysticism...* Klein smiled.

"Just call me Sherlock, Aaron."

Yes, ever since I've stopped being a Nighthawk, the composition of my mysticism knowledge has become stranger and stranger. On the one hand, I've grasped quite a few secrets which are related to High-Sequences and deities, and on the other hand, I only understand the more basic ritualistic magic. Among the more complicated ones, I only know the sacrificial rites and bestowment rituals. As for charms, all I know are those three... Klein sighed to himself, feeling an urgent need for a more comprehensive and in-depth book of mysticism.

As for the knowledge required to separate a Beyonder characteristic from the spiritual corruption of an evil god, he had no clues whatsoever at the moment.

...

After a short afternoon nap at the club, Klein rode in a public carriage to the Rice Circus near the Tussock River in Cherwood Borough.

Today wasn't a holiday nor was it a weekend. There weren't many visitors at the circus, and the clowns that were responsible for entertaining and amusing the visitors all seemed listless.

Passing between the Divination Lodge and the tents that sold pies, pancakes, fruit pies, and alcoholic beverages, Klein walked along the edge of the circus and found a small theater. On the blackboard at the entrance, it read: "Non-holiday and weekends: four performances a day, one hour per performance."

The first performance in the afternoon was at two o'clock. It had just begun.

After buying his ticket, Klein entered the theater and heard cheers.

At this moment, a beast trainer was on stage, holding a whip and ordering a black bear to perform in a charmingly naive manner. Next to him lay a tiger, with criss-crossed yellow-black stripes, and a seated dark and curly-haired baboon.

Pa!

The black bear rolled awkwardly as the trainer whipped it.

"I say, this guy wanted to give you a slap just a moment ago!" In the front row of the rows of seats, someone suddenly shouted loudly, which immediately attracted the laughter of a handful in the audience.

They thought it was a new way for the circus to amuse them.

However, Klein didn't think so, for he noticed that the color of the trainer's emotions leaned toward anger and annoyance.

He smiled and went to sit in the first row, watching the performance on the stage so as to not waste the price he paid for the tickets.

At that moment, the person who had just spoken shouted again, "That tiger wants to bite your neck off, that curly-haired baboon wants to use you as a cushion!"

Amidst the laughter of the audience, the beast trainer's actions clearly stiffened.

This... Even though those words sound like they're causing trouble, why do I detect a hint of a warning... Klein looked over his shoulder at the speaker in the same row and saw that he was a chubby-faced man in his thirties.

This tone, this way... It's kind of familiar... Klein mumbled silently to himself.

Inside the small theater of the Rice Circus.

As long as something felt familiar, there was no problem for a Seer to recall it. Klein nudged his gold-rimmed glasses up on his nose, leaned back, and murmured something almost soundlessly.

Soon after, he pretended to close his eyes to rest for more than ten seconds. In reality, he had used the help of Cogitation to quickly fall asleep and be reminded through his dream.

It was a rather dim room, with only one candle flickering on the coffee table. The people sitting around it were all wearing black hooded robes and iron masks that covered only half their faces.

Deliberately massaging his glabella, Klein opened his eyes and continued watching the beast taming performance.

He had interpreted the revelation and knew the source of the familiarity: the scene in the dream was of the Beyonder gathering organized by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom.

There was also an Apothecary with a chubby face who enjoyed using sarcasm as a warning. Although he was clearly a kindhearted fellow, he always gave others the feeling that he deserved a beating.

Could it be that Apothecary? That shouldn't be the case. When did he learn beast taming... According to the confidential records of the Nighthawks, an Apothecary doesn't have Spirit Vision like those of the Seer pathway who were able to distinguish emotional colors in detail. Well, when it comes to the color of auras, they're actually quite good at it... Klein's thoughts slowly dispersed without affecting his appreciation of the performance onstage.

In his Spirit Vision, the emotional colors of the black bear, the tiger, and the curly-haired baboon were indeed unstable. If there was an addition level of provocation to a certain degree, they might very well rampage on the spot. This indirectly confirmed that the chubby man who had just spoken wasn't causing trouble. He seemed to be able to read the thoughts of the three animals and understand their impulses.

Having received the warnings, the beast trainer's face darkened with anger, but even so, his actions were instinctively gentler. He was more careful, and the show ended without a hitch.

After that, there was a simple but comedic skit. Only when it was over was it the magician's turn to perform.

This magician wore a tuxedo. He wore a bow tie of the same color, as well as a large top hat. The moment he appeared, he spat out fire from his mouth, which immediately caused the audience to applaud and cheer.

Such a simple trick... Klein, who had excellent eyesight and had watched quite a few magic lesson programs, understood the gist of it with just a quick glance.

Next, the magician performed: the classic escape act, releasing flying doves from his hat, pulling out flowers, card tricks, and so on. Klein thought he could easily see through every one of the magician's tricks, but he was surprised to discover that, at some point, he actually failed to do so because his attention had been drawn to where the magician wished it to be, causing him to ignore the key details.

He clearly doesn't have any Beyonder powers, but his technique is still able to fool my eyes. Hmm, the key point is grasping attention... The Magician's second principle is fully divert a target's attention, thus achieving the desired effect? Klein made a guess in his mind which he wasn't sure if it was right or wrong.

It needed him to "act" it out to receive feedback.

At this moment, the magician's performance came to an end. The audience weren't stingy with their warm applause and cheers. The atmosphere in the theater reached its peak that afternoon.

Heh heh, the third principle. A Magician's performance requires the applause of the audience for his performance? Klein muttered to himself in a half-joking and half-guessing manner in silence.

Shortly after three o'clock, he pulled the collar of his black double-breasted frock coat and left the small theater. He didn't try to come into contact with the chubby man who was suspected to be the Apothecary

and only secretly remembered his appearance—soliciting him suddenly might result in extreme reactions.

He took a tracked public carriage back to Minsk Street.

The carriage was divided into two floors and each of them had a few passengers. According to his usual practice, Klein chose the spot next to the window on the first floor.

The carriage proceeded and stopped from time to time. Klein, who had half-closed his eyes to recall the inspiration he had just had, suddenly felt his heart palpitate. He became sober and rational—the reaction was like someone had forcibly intruded into his dream or channeled his spirit.

At this moment, he clearly knew that he was no longer in the real world!

As someone rich with experience, he pretended to be unconcerned. He looked around and saw that the gentleman in a tuxedo and top hat to his left was still flipping through a newspaper. There were two children who were being reprimanded by a vexed woman in a light blue dress for being disobedient troublemakers. Beside her, people were chewing on bread or drinking tea that they had brought with them... Everything was the same as before.

However, when Klein quietly activated his Spirit Vision, these passengers didn't emit any of the corresponding auras or emotions!

They don't have Ether Bodies!

They're clearly talking, eating bread, and reading newspapers, but none of them have any signs of life!

Is this an illusion, or did they just suddenly die and are just moving according to the inertia of their lives? Klein tried to remain calm as he looked out the window and saw carriages and pedestrians passing by. It was still an afternoon scene.

However, they also have no aura colors... As the carriage moved forward rather slowly, Klein became more and more serious, not understanding what had just happened.

He lowered his head and examined himself. He saw a clear spirituality luster which was completely different from the people around him.

At that moment, he suddenly heard an angry roar. It didn't sound like it came from a human!

Klein looked up and saw a large black dog on the street.

Its sharp white teeth were stained with traces of blood and rust. It was the huge Devil dog that had committed heinous crimes!

The black dog quickly swelled into a tall devil. It had bat-like wings on its back and goat horns, filled with mysterious patterns, that grew from its head. It looked up at the sky and said in the devil language, "Corruption!"

Almost as soon as it opened its mouth, Klein confirmed that it was real, because it possessed aura and emotion colors while strong spirituality lusters were being emitted from it!

Following the howls of the huge Devil dog, a few illusory pedestrians exploded and turned into a black mist that filled the air, blocking his line of sight.

However, Klein could vaguely see that there were quite a few "real people" with aura colors in midair and around him. They were using Beyonder powers which emitted spirituality lusters.

What's going on? Ordinary people are illusory, but the Beyonders are real... Have the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers found the Devil dog and used a Sealed Artifact to create a battle environment which wouldn't disturb reality? That Sealed Artifact is only aimed at Beyonders, and it has no effect on normal people? Thus, I, who just happened to pass by, was pulled in out of bad luck? Klein's mind raced as he roughly guessed what had happened to him.

What a ridiculous disaster... Just as he was sighing with emotion, he suddenly heard a blood-curdling shriek, a sharp and loud scream.

The black gas that screened his vision suddenly dispersed, and the gigantic Devil dog fell heavily onto the ground. Its body was divided into two halves, and all the light in the air converged on something,

making it look like a clean, pure moon shining down on the dark environment.

The gigantic Devil dog tenaciously roared again, and its body suddenly exploded. Using its soul and flesh as fuel, it ignited blue and red flames that soared into the sky.

However, the flames lost all of their brightness as soon as they reached midair, having been absorbed by that bright and resplendent moon-like object.

It disappeared without a trace, and that huge Devil dog died so simply and completely, not even leaving a speck of it behind.

So powerful... As Klein was sighing, he suddenly thought of something. Would those official Beyonders discover that he— another wild Beyonder—was sitting in the carriage, different from the other illusory people in the surrounding area?

His heart tightened as his scalp went numb. He pulled out a paper figurine, and with a shake, he transformed it into himself, a copy that was without any aura or emotional colors.

As for him, with the help of the substitution spell, he hid in the paper figurine's "shadow."

At this moment, Klein heard a light snort from across the street.

The snort was clearly filled with anger and indignation.

Who is it? It doesn't seem like the sound an official Beyonder will make... Klein was puzzled, but he didn't dare to dispel his double and peek his head out to look.

Following which, a few pairs of eyes swept across the crowd, not stopping for even a moment.

When all this faded away, Klein saw that the void around him had cracked and shattered like glass.

Then the feeling of reality inundated him, and he knew he was back in the real world.

After removing the double, he sat back in his seat. The passengers in the carriage were doing their respective deeds— reading newspapers, chewing bread, and scolding children. It was no different from before.

But in Klein's vision, they had regained their aura and their emotional colors.

In addition, compared to earlier, the tracked carriage had clearly moved forward by quite a distance.

It seems like in that special battle environment earlier, time and space are synchronized with reality. If that battle had continued for a long time, then the carriage would've left the area of influence, leaving me alone there. Alone there... That would be an obvious exposure... Fortunately, Backlund is the Capital of Capitals and the Land of Hope. There are High-Sequence Beyonders from the three major Churches residing here... Klein thought with a lingering sense of fear.

He had originally thought that even if they had locked onto their target, it would still take the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and others several days to find the black Devil dog. Moreover, that was on the premise that the dog hadn't left Backlund. That was something certain, because leaving Backlund would mean stepping out of the range of the ritual, and the advancement would fail. And to the Devil, the negative impact of a failed ritual would cause it, who was already struggling at the edge of bloodlust, to immediately lose control.

Who would've thought that just after one night and half a day, the gigantic Devil dog would be discovered, executed, and cleansed!

Terrifying! This is Backlund... This is the true power of the three Churches! A Sequence 6 Beyonder who's just about to advance was merely exposed and had left behind the tiniest of traces. Yet, he was quickly found and killed so easily... This is a Devil that can sense danger ahead of time! From the looks of it, some Sealed Artifact perfectly hinders this trait... In the future, I must be even more careful! Klein felt that he had learned a great lesson.

At this moment, he remembered the strange snort he had heard earlier.

It seemed to be the companion of that gigantic Devil dog? Its master? He was actually not discovered. Perhaps the final explosion of the gigantic Devil dog was secretly orchestrated by him... Of course, it's also possible that he's a member of some secret organization that is unsatisfied with the official Beyonders... Klein abruptly looked out the window on the opposite side of the carriage. All he saw were people walking past looking ordinary. They either wore tweed coats, half top hats, or bright long skirts. He couldn't tell if there was anything wrong with them.

Chapter 328: He That Touches Pitch Shall Be Defiled

The wheels of the carriage pressed down on the track as the horses dragged it along. The heavy carriage steadily advanced, and soon, they were moving away from the street as though nothing had happened.

With a normal expression, Klein held onto his cane and waited until the tracked public carriage passed two stations before he got off ahead of time. He took a large detour and slowly headed back to the place where the gigantic Devil dog had been killed.

He wasn't looking for its Beyonder characteristics, as it was impossible for the top experts of the Church to not know about this matter. They would've definitely taken it away long ago. He also wasn't investigating the source of that slight snort. After all, with so much time having passed by, the carriages moving on the streets, and the people that were coming and going, how could there be any clues left behind? Even divination would fail to obtain an answer.

Klein's purpose was to look at the subtle details that remained along the street, and to see the nature of the Sealed Artifact that had created the strange environment for the battle, so as to prepare for what might happen in the future.

This is a Magician's acting... He sighed silently as he walked under the gray sky, along the edge of the street which was marked by the gas lamps.

The reason why he had to wait two stops before getting off and taking a detour, was because he was worried that there would be an official Beyonder who would sweep the battlefield in secret.

He didn't want to meet them, so he tried his best not to.

Klein, who was dressed decently and holding onto a cane, took some time before he returned to the huge Devil dog's place of death. However, there were no traces of its presence on the street, and the passersby clearly didn't know that a fierce Beyonder battle had taken place here.

That Sealed Artifact is really magical. It's even more powerful than large-scale hypnosis. Klein activated his Spirit Vision and slowed his footsteps, like a gentleman on an outing rather than on an errand.

It took him over half an hour to complete his tour of the area, but his efforts with his Spirit Vision was futile. There was nothing out of the ordinary about his target area.

However, Klein's spiritual perception sensed one thing: its scope and its boundaries.

When I entered the block and left from another direction, I felt a subtle and illusory feeling, as if I entered a different world from another world. That is to say, the Sealed Artifact's scope of influence can reach at least one block, and its upper limit is temporarily unclear. Klein stood outside the target street, and nodded thoughtfully before returning. He went to a decent cafe, ordered a cup of Southville coffee, and sat down by the window.

As he drank the fluid with a rich aroma, he observed the street outside, which was beginning to bustle as time passed by, hoping to see any changes.

Unfortunately, what he had been looking forward to didn't happen.

Of course, he wasn't without gains. At the very least, he confirmed that a Magician "never performed unprepared," which was one of the rules of acting.

He felt that the characteristics of the subtle precipitate in his body stirred a little.

In the evening, Klein stopped his observations and returned to Minsk Street in a public carriage.

At this moment, the gas lamps on both sides of the road had already been lit, illuminating the slightly wet cement ground with withered leaves that fell from the trees along the road with a blue hue.

Holding his cane, Klein strolled past the house of Lawyer Jurgen and strolled to Unit 15.

As he was walking, he suddenly thought of something. He had finished all the ingredients at home. If he went back now, he wouldn't be able to cook dinner!

Uh, should I go to the meat shop and fruit shop, or find a restaurant to fill my stomach first? Klein hesitated for a moment, he then finally decided to take a break tonight and eat something ready-made.

Many of the dishes in this world were made quite simply and very quickly, so it didn't become a situation where an hour was spent cooking for five minutes of eating. However, there was still a certain amount of work to be done. Furthermore, he had to wash the dishes and wash the knives and forks himself.

After touching his wallet, Klein turned around and walked in the direction of the area, where according to his memory, there were restaurants.

Once again he passed the house of Lawyer Jurgen's.

Standing behind the open oriel window and looking at the "confused" expression Detective Moriarty had, Jurgen raised his voice and said, "Mr. Moriarty, did... I mean, did you forget your key again? Or did you drop your key?"

Why is he saying "again?" Klein replied with a chuckle, "No, not really."

Jurgen solemnly nodded his head.

"Then why don't you come to my place?

"You can return when it's completely dark after we have dinner." ... Klein hesitated for a second and smiled.

"It will be my honor."

When he entered, the black cat, Brody, was licking his paws in a corner. Jurgen didn't make much small talk as he stepped into the kitchen.

After Klein had hung up his coat and hat and put away his black cane, he stepped into the dining room and saw that the table was already covered with food—blackened steaks and mashed potatoes of the same color.

He wasn't surprised by this. This was how Mrs. Doris, Lawyer Jurgen's grandmother, cooked in her old age. The food didn't look appetizing, but they were delicious.

She's a good chef... Klein sat in front of Jurgen, smiled and made some small talk.

"Were you about to have dinner?"

"Yes, it's a habit of mine to look at the scenery outside before my meal. It allows my thoughts to spread without boundaries." Jurgen spread out his napkin and picked up his fork and knife.

Klein looked around in puzzlement and asked, "Where's Mrs. Doris?"

Jurgen sighed and replied seriously, "The weather is getting colder and colder. Her chronic lung problems are back, so she has no choice but to be admitted to the hospital for a while."

"May God bless her." Klein drew the triangular Sacred Emblem of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery on his chest unfamiliarly.

Then he cut a piece of steak and forked it before stuffing it into his mouth.

At that moment, he suddenly thought of a problem and hurriedly asked, "So, you were the one who prepared dinner?"

"Of course. It was done a few minutes ago," Jurgen answered simply.

If it isn't the work of the great chef, Mrs. Doris, then this food... The corner of Klein's mouth twitched. He held back the fear in his heart and still bit down on the small piece of steak on his silver fork, slowly chewing on it.

His brows furrowed a little as he forcefully swallowed the food. He squeezed a smile as he asked, "Why did you prepare two servings in advance?"

"One serving was prepared to be taken to the hospital for my grandmother." Jurgen glanced up at Klein. "I'll make another one later."

"...So that's how it is." To be polite, Klein secretly took a deep breath and steeled himself as though prepared to do battle with the food in front of him and finish it.

By the time he was finished, Jurgen still had a tiny bit left. The senior solicitor put down his fork and knife, picked up the glass beside him, took a sip of red wine, and asked without expression, "How's it?

"Which dish do you like the most?

"I know there's still a large gap between my skills and my grandmother's, but it shouldn't be too exaggerated."

Mr. Lawyer, I suspect you have problems with your sense of taste besides facial myopathy... Can't you realize your standards? Klein smiled, moved his head from left to right, and said, "The white bread isn't bad."

"That was bought from Dodge bakery." Jurgen reburied his head and finished the rest of the food.

After drinking the remaining wine, he thought for a moment and said, "Detective Moriarty, I want to entrust you with a simple task."

"What is it?" Klein kept drinking water.

The mashed potatoes were too salty!

"My grandma's been in the hospital lately. I might not be able to return because of my cases. This will lead to Brody being hungry." Jurgen glanced at the black cat. "I want you to feed Brody when I'm not back, clean up his litter box, and play with him for a while. He loves to be scratched under the chin. Yes, every night at ten, if there's no light in the house and it's dark, you can come in, Two soli every time, until my grandmother comes home."

Klein saw the solemn and prim look on Jurgen's face. He smiled and said, "It's a simple task. The reward is quite generous. I have no reason to reject it."

As he spoke, he turned to look at Brody the black cat and smiled at it.

Brody slowly turned his body and faced Klein with his back.

Klein's smile couldn't help but freeze on his face.

...

After drinking his fill, Klein excused himself from Jurgen's place. He strolled back to his rented house in the completely dark streets.

By this time, the people who had finished their work had already returned home and were enjoying their dinner. There were very few pedestrians on the streets and not many carriages. It was very quiet.

Walking under the light of the gas lamp, Klein, who had no urgent desire to return, slowed down. So did the black shadow at his feet.

When he passed by the Sammers, he saw through the oriel window that the interior was brightly lit. People were moving back and forth, and sounds of chatter and laughing could be heard.

As for next door, 15 Minsk Street, it was dark and silent.

With a sigh, Klein quickened his pace, took out his key, and opened the door.

Before he went in, he checked the mailbox out of habit and found another letter lying inside.

Who sent it? Klein took out the letter and glanced at it under the light of the street lamp.

No stamps... It looks like Isengard Stanton's handwriting... He nodded slightly, went inside, closed the door, switched on the light, and opened the letter.

The great detective Isengard said in the letter:

"...I'm very pleased to inform you that the murderer has been found and killed on the spot.

"The police think that our work is worth at least half the bounty. They should be disbursing it to me this week. When that happens, I will invite you and our other friends to come over and share this bounty."

...

Isengard received the news so quickly? He sure has a close relationship with the Backlund police... Oh, it's without a stamp. That means that he got someone to deliver it directly. The Loen Kingdom's postal system isn't that efficient. How could a letter sent in the afternoon arrive in the evening? Klein sighed, put down the letter, and got ready to change into a new outfit before heading out.

With the serial murders out of the way and the situation in Backlund easing, he could try to do a couple things.

For example, find Kaspars at the Bravehearts Bar and contact Maric to see if the Beyonder who could control zombies and Miss Sharron had any books regarding mysticism.

If my guess is right, they should be the defectors of the Rose School of Thought. They were previously in an official organization, and they must know a lot of mysticism knowledge. And now, I have enough money to buy them! Klein touched his wallet and thought in anticipation.

Chapter 329: Claw Marks

Backlund Bridge area, Bravehearts Bar.

Klein pressed down the cap on his head, carefully protecting the wallet in the inside pocket of his grayish-blue worker's jacket. He walked around the customers who were surrounding the boxing ring and headed for the bar.

On the way, he looked around and didn't see the black market arms dealer, Kaspars Kalinin.

He's either playing cards or playing billiards... Klein nodded to himself, sat down at the bar, and said to the bartender, "Half and Half."

He had seen someone drink this type of alcoholic beverage the last time, and he felt that it likely suited his palate.

At least it's better than pure malt beer... Klein thought to himself.

The bartender raised his head and glanced at him.

"Which two alcohols do you want mixed? Different choices, different prices."

"The typical one; the typical one will do." The last time he saw someone drink it, the person had used alcohol of the worst quality. The whole glass of Half and Half was only worth two and a half pence.

"Four and a half pence." The bartender watched as Klein arranged the brass coins on the bar and then went back to mixing. He said in passing, "You here for Kaspars? He's not here anymore; his business has been snatched." "Huh?" Klein didn't expect such an answer.

Before the bartender could reply, a man with a protruded mouth next to him laughed and said, "Yes, we've chased Kaspars away!

"Heh, how can a lame old man like him do such a business?

"If you have anything you need, feel free to come to us. Find our boss."

A gang war? Klein subconsciously came up with this idea, wanting to reject the man's suggestion.

However, he soon thought of another possibility.

Could it be that the Rose School of Thought has deliberately sought out a gang to suppress Kaspars so as to force Maric and Miss Sharron to jump into a trap?

Yes, it's quite possible. Kaspars had been working here as a black market arms dealer for a long time; he's definitely not someone who can be chased away just like that. A while ago, because of the series of murders, the atmosphere in the whole of Backlund was rather tense, and the Rose School of Thought or other hidden factions wouldn't dare to recklessly kill and use spirit mediumship on Maric and Miss Sharron, even if they found them. This would result in a lot of bloodshed, and since they obviously only have a few suspects, and are unable to confirm anyone else having a way to contact Miss Sharron and Maric for the time being... Klein swallowed the words he was about to say and asked instead, "Can I first get a quote before deciding whether to purchase?"

He planned to observe the faction made up of ordinary people who had taken over Bravehearts Bar's black market. If he discovered any problems, then he could use them as a favor to give to Kaspars, Sharron, and Maric.

In any case, Klein didn't want any conflict. He only planned on observing via normal processes, so there was no risk.

"Yes, the only requirement is..." The man made a zipping motion with his hand in front of his protruding mouth.

"No problem." As soon as Klein answered, he saw the Half and Half in front of him, and the copper coins had been taken away by the bartender.

Without any intention of wasting it, he tipped his head and drank it. His brows gradually furrowed.

It's not what I thought it would be. The taste of the spirit is too heavy, the grape flavors are too mild... Klein put down his glass and followed the man to the third billiard room where Kaspars used to stay in.

When he was about to reach the door, he suddenly thought of something.

As someone who doesn't know much, even I can guess that this is a trap. I wonder if Miss Sharron and Maric who have been hunted for so long know about it? They definitely wouldn't appear...

However, Kaspars knows more than one Beyonder. He has connections with several different circles of Beyonders, and he might be able to get other helpers. That would complicate things.

At that moment, the man with the protruding mouth stopped at the doorway of the billiard room, and the distracted Klein almost bumped into him.

He pointed inside and said, "Don't talk nonsense later. Our boss doesn't have a good temper.

"Everyone in the Backlund Bridge area and East Borough knows this."

"Alright." Klein nodded.

Satisfied, the man with the protruding mouth turned and pushed open the billiard room's door.

As the door opened, Klein saw a figure hanging in the air, gently swaying.

It was a burly man with a full beard. There was a rope tied around his neck, a rope that was tied in a dead knot.

His feet were off the ground, the tip of his tongue was protruding out, and his face was purple. He wore a contorted expression.

"Boss..." the man with the protruding mouth cried out in disbelief.

As soon as the tension in Backlund's atmosphere disappears, someone takes action... Klein tilted his head and glanced at the subordinate, he then solemnly drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"May he find peace with God.

"I hope his temper is cured as a result."

The man with the protruded mouth didn't even hear what he said. He suddenly shouted, "Boss!

"Murder!

“Boss is dead!”

Klein took two steps back as a result of the loud and shrill voice, and he also activated his Spirit Vision to take a look inside the room. There was nothing special other than the scattered billiard balls all over the place.

Did a Beyonder from Kaspars do it? What would the faction who planted the trap do? If there was actually such a trap... Klein quietly moved away and slunk away into the crowd when the other gang members swarmed over.

He glanced at the kitchen of the Bravehearts Bar and, with some thought, went over and familiarly passed through to the back door.

As soon as he pushed open the not-so-heavy wooden door, Klein felt a cold wind blowing against him which caused him to shiver.

And amidst the cold wind was the faint smell of blood.

He listened for a moment but saw nothing. He took out his penny and flicked it up.

The landing sound was cut off by the wind, and Klein looked down at the copper penny in his palm, confirming that it was heads.

Putting the coin away, he carefully walked forward, heading in the direction that his spiritual perception told him to.

He walked to a dark corner where there wasn’t any illumination from the street lamps. The smell of blood suddenly became stronger.

With the help of the weak moonlight that penetrated through the clouds, Klein almost gasped when he saw what was in front of him.

The floor here was littered with bloody thighs, calves, boots, ribs, a heart, arms, eyeballs, and other human parts. On the wall hung a portion of pale red intestines. The background was a large patch of bright red with milky white markings.

Seeing this, Klein felt like he was looking at a slaughterhouse, a slaughterhouse specially prepared for humans.

Is the murderer afraid that the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and the others are too idle? This is so exaggerated that the police would immediately transfer the case to them... Klein muttered in his mind to resist the discomfort caused by the scene.

He walked around the blood and approached the opposite wall. To his surprise, there were quite a few deep scratches.

It was like a thick and sharp claw that forcefully scratched out a mark!

The claw is similar to the one the Devil dog had after its transformation. Could it be that there's another one? Could it not be dead yet? No, no, no, I know what's going on... Klein suddenly came to a realization.

The deceased must be the Beyonder who killed the bar's gang leader. He was finished off by the faction who had set the trap...

According to Little Sun's description, I've always suspected that the faction is the Rose School of Thought because they grasp the Prisoner pathway, which is also the mutant pathway.

And one type of mutant was the werewolf!

This was in line with the traces of the crime scene before him.

It also indirectly proves that Miss Sharron and Maric are defectors of the Rose School of Thought...

Klein calmly retreated out of the scene, one step at a time.

During this process, he confirmed that there weren't any Beyonder characteristics present. Of course, it was possible that it hadn't appeared yet.

Then he turned and walked towards another street, intending to get someone to inform the police, lest such a scene frighten the commoners and make them suspect that Backlund had been infiltrated by some ferocious beast.

Because he didn't want to get into trouble over greed, Klein didn't wait for the possibility of a Beyonder characteristic appearing.

Just as he reached the end of the alley, he suddenly saw a brown carriage slowly approaching in the night.

The carriage didn't continue to move forward like the other carriages. Instead, it stopped right in front of Klein!

Klein narrowed his eyes as he prepared to do battle. However, whether it was his spirituality intuition as a Seer or the battle sense of a Clown, neither of them gave him a warning.

At this moment, the window of the carriage was opened, revealing a pale face which wore a hint of madness to it. Its brown eyes seemed to conceal deep malice.

Maric... Klein recognized him.

It was Maric, Miss Sharron's companion who controlled zombies!

He was only wearing a white shirt and a black vest, and he didn't seem to be afraid of the cold at all. He gestured for Klein to board the carriage.

For a moment Klein hesitated, wanting to use his spirit pendulum to divine right there on the spot.

At this moment, a figure appeared behind Maric. She wore a complex black regal dress and a small, soft hat. It was the blonde Miss Sharron with blue eyes.

She can easily do me harm if she wants to. She can directly come out from the wall behind me... Klein thought for a moment, then he deliberately took two steps forward casually. He opened the carriage door and took note of it.

After he sat down, the carriage began to move slowly. It was unknown where its destination was.

"Why did you come here?" Sharron asked simply.

Klein answered frankly, "I wanted to contact the both of you and ask if you have any books on mysticism. It would be best if they went in-depth. As you know, I lack such knowledge."

Maric continued looking over with malice-filled eyes as he said in a slightly hoarse and low voice, “We do have a lot of knowledge regarding mysticism, such as Shaman King

Klarman’s Book of Secrets, but what can you use to trade for it?”

Shaman King? Which pathway and Sequence is that? As these thoughts flashed past his mind, Klein deliberated his tone and said, “I can trade for it with gold pounds.

“Or do you need anything else?”

The pale, but exquisite-looking Sharron looked at him and replied stoically, “Help.

“We’ll use your help as barter.”

Help? Klein repeated the word silently and was momentarily a little stumped.

Back when Sharron had taken on the mission of protecting him for three days, it was mostly because of the money. For a Sequence 5 expert to be willing to take on such a mission was, in itself, a low probability. It could be chanced upon, but it wasn't something that could be forced. Furthermore, back then, Klein was desperately trying to save himself and was so frantic that he wasn't willing to give up any sliver of hope. As such, he still felt very grateful for being able to receive the help of such a powerful Beyonder, even if it was because of the money.

However, that was all. He wouldn't recklessly interfere in an unknown, dangerous situation in complete disregard of his own strength and circumstances for the sake of the other party.

Klein's original plan was that the mysticism knowledge from Little Sun could basically be verified as belonging to the preCataclysm era. At that time, the ancient gods who wielded authority and the current seven gods and evil gods didn't seem to have any overlap with each other, so it was possible that the two mysticism systems were definitely hugely different. So, even if he knew the details, he didn't dare to carelessly try it out. He had to receive indirect verification in order to know which ones could still be used and which ones didn't have any effect.

It was just like the sacrificial ritual from before. Klein had already figured out the procedure from The Sun, but he waited for Mr. Azik's reply before he dared to conduct the experiment. It was to prevent anything unexpected from happening.

As for The Hanged Man, he was at the rank of bishop or captain of the Church of Storms, so he definitely possessed quite a bit of mysticism knowledge as well. However, the problem was that this was too orthodox and too involved with the Lord of Storm's domain; thereby, making it not necessarily suitable for Klein to use. Not all rituals could

be performed by asking oneself for help, and he had to consider the spirituality burden he had to bear by praying to himself.

With these factors in mind, Klein turned his attention to the former members of a secret organization, Sharron and Maric. The knowledge they possessed was more suitable for wild Beyonders to use as a reference. There were also quite a few unorthodox and strange ones that were effective.

Of course, this wasn't to say that he would give up on exchanging information with The Sun and The Hanged Man. By having knowledge from ancient times, orthodox knowledge, and secret and unorthodox knowledge, it would result in him being more all-rounded, giving him a deeper understanding of mysticism!

And that was exactly what Klein wanted.

He had never forgotten that his ultimate goal was to return to Earth, so the more mysticism knowledge he had, the better. The more comprehensive, the better; the deeper the knowledge was, the better it was!

Of course, the premise of pursuing this goal is to get rid of Ince Zangwill, and avenge myself and the Captain... Klein looked at Sharron and Maric and said with the corners of his mouth curled up, "I need to know what kind of help you need from me before I can consider agreeing.

"I won't, nor is it possible for me to joke about my life."

Sharron, who was wearing a small black hat, nodded slightly and acknowledged Klein's words.

Maric, who was seated on the other side, leaned forward and put his fist to his mouth.

"We originally belonged to a rather old and secretive organization."

That I can guess... Klein maintained a serious and stoic expression.

"That organization took shape at the beginning of the Fifth Epoch, after the storms of the Berserk Sea cut off the Northern and Southern Continents, forming the Southern Continent's Highlands Kingdom and

Paz Kingdom. However, I'm only talking about it taking shape. This organization's origins can be traced back to before the Fourth Epoch, all the way before the Cataclysm." the pale Maric continued describing.

That, I know that too. The Rose School of Thought, isn't it... It's traceable back to the time of the Mutant King... Klein wore an attentive look.

Maric scratched his slightly messy hair and said, "This organization believes in an evil god, and they believe that magic is a science and art that changes according to one's will to change things. This requires the establishment of a religious ritual system, including law and order. Yes, before the invasion of the Northern Continent, they were an orthodox organization in the Paz Valley and the Star Highlands, alongside the Church of the God of Death.

"At the same time, they believed that their wills originated from various desires. Combined with Beyonder powers, they were able to accomplish all sorts of unimaginable things.

"Because of these ideas, they retained an ancient and bloody tradition of primitive sacrifice, including the skinning of people and using the skulls of children as ritual objects, letting a large number of believers fervently release all sorts of desires.

"We couldn't accept the cruelty of such deeds, and we also felt that it was very problematic in the way that they handle their desires, so we looked for an opportunity to escape from that organization.

Problematic in the way they handle their desires? Klein knew that the Rose School of Thought was famous for its bloody sacrifices, so he wasn't very curious about the former.

The blonde and black-dressed Sharron replied in an ethereal voice, "The way they do it is to indulge and burn.

"Our philosophy is to repress and show temperance."

So that's how it is... Klein suddenly thought of the description of the Prisoner Sequence. The body was the cage of the heart, and the world

was the cage of the body. Madness was bound, and desire was suppressed.

If the Rose School of Thought did grasp the Mutant pathway of Prisoner, Miss Sharron's and Maric's philosophy is clearly more suited to the needs of the acting method. Why couldn't the other members notice this? That's not right... He frowned slightly.

Seeing his reaction, Maric thought he didn't understand and explained in a slightly hoarse voice, "They were influenced by that evil god, and they believe that indulging in their desires would help to strengthen their own willpower. When many people let their hair loose, they would also affect each other, adding to their fanaticism, allowing their condition to reach its peak.

"Our views are the exact opposite. We believe that desire must always be suppressed in one's heart, just like the flames and magma underground. Only at a crucial moment can it be unleashed, producing terrifying power."

Simply put, it's the difference between lust and abstinence... The influence that the evil god has is in contradiction to his own pathway's requirements. It feels like something is amiss... Klein thoughtfully asked, "So you escaped to Backlund, and now they're coming after you?

"Did the dead man in the alley end up involved in this?"

"We didn't get him involved. He got himself involved because of something else," Maric rebutted Klein's second guess, acquiescing to Klein's first question.

Then, why don't you just run away from Backlund? There are quite a few big cities along the border of the Loen Kingdom and Desi Bay. Furthermore, you can go to Intis, Feysac, Feynapotter, Lenburg, Masin, and other countries... In other words, you have a reason not to leave Backlund? What could it be? Klein thought for a moment and said, "Okay, I've got the general gist of it. Hmm, what kind of help do you need?

“My Sequence isn’t high, and I don’t know any powerful Beyonders. There’s no way I can go against that secret organization directly.”

After obtaining the potion formulas for Sequence 7, 6, and 5 of the Seer pathway and killing Lanevus, Klein actually didn’t have to stay in Backlund.

There was still a huge gap between him and his next target of vengeance, Ince Zangwill who had Sealed Artifact 0-08. There was no hope of success within a short period of time. He didn’t even dare to approach it, so it wasn’t impossible to leave Backlund. At the very most, he would feel the pinch for wasting the rental fee that he had paid upfront.

The reason why Klein was still staying in this large city was because there were a lot of Beyonders here. There were also many resources and ingredients that appeared here. It made it one of the most convenient places to advance his Sequence. It suited the revelation of his divination back then.

When I become a Faceless and am almost done digesting it, I’ll have to head out to sea and look for a mermaid... This thought suddenly flashed through Klein’s mind.

Sharron replied calmly, “Be our support.

“To kill a Sequence 5 Beyonder, together.”

Klein was slightly surprised as he asked, “With your strength, that organization only sent one Sequence 5 Beyonder to hunt you down?”

Could it be that the common characteristic of a cult was to be brainless?

“He has a Sealed Artifact that greatly restrains me,” Sharron answered calmly, her face pale but her expression delicate. “The person in charge of this matter is indeed a High-Sequence Beyonder.”

“But he has been led elsewhere by the clues that we deliberately left behind,” Maric added. “It’s not like we only have Backlund as our only base. If we can kill the person in charge of the nearby boroughs and take away that Sealed Artifact, we will immediately disguise ourselves and flee. After that, we will no longer be afraid of being hunted down

normally." Klein tersely acknowledged. "But why do you think I can help?" *I look so weak...*

And the target is a Sequence 5 Beyonder with power and that strange Sealed Artifact!

"You're not just at Sequence 9. You're also very special," Sharron looked at him silently with her blue eyes and said with certainty.

"Haha." Klein could only reply with a dry laugh.

Sharron's ethereal voice sounded once again.

"Besides, you still have that 'eye.'"

That eye? Are you referring to the All-Black Eye left behind by Marionettist Rosago? Klein nodded slightly.

"But I can only use a small portion of it, and it can't produce too much of an effect since it was corrupted by the True Creator."

"That's enough." Sharron was always so terse with her words.

Maric added, "The Sequence 5 Beyonder we are dealing with has similar characteristics as Sharron. Only that 'eye' of yours can help us find him."

At that moment, Sharron spoke again.

"Maric will be the first bait.

"I'll be the second.

"As for you, you are the hunter responsible for solving the problem.

"I can't guarantee absolute safety.

"But you will definitely be safer than us."

Sounds sincere enough, but I'll need to make sure through divination... Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "I want to understand the situation about the other person's characteristics and Sealed Artifact. Only then can I make a decision."

Dressed in a black regal dress, Sharron pursed her bloodless lips and tilted her head to look at Maric, nodding slightly.

Maric clasped his hands and said while concealing some of his madness, "You know about the Prisoner pathway, don't you?"

"Yes, I've heard of it in the Beyonder circles," Klein answered frankly.

Of course, these Beyonder circles refer to the Nighthawks and the Tarot Club... He sighed in his heart as he added.

Maric seemed to recall something, and he was silent for nearly twenty seconds. Outside the window, he could hear the rhythmic sound of the carriage wheels rolling across the concrete pavement.

He ruffled his messy brown hair and spoke with a slightly twisted expression on his face.

"Prisoners are those who are locked up in prisons, and that also corresponds to having their spirituality and desires constrained by reason, body, and the world. The Beyonders of this Sequence have strong bodies and keen senses, often possessing both a staid appearance and a crazy heart within them. They possess many criminal techniques and are proficient in killing with whatever they can casually acquire.

"Their corresponding Sequence 8 is Lunatic. I believe you aren't aware of this because even an orthodox Beyonder organization like the seven Orthodox Churches aren't fully aware of such matters. That secret organization's member wields powers that far exceed your imagination. Those nearly twisted bastards are bound, be it their bodies or souls. It would be difficult to obtain any useful information by just relying on mediumship and divination.

"Sharron and I had also put up with this and waited for a very long time before we found a way to remove this binding and successfully escape.

"As all the Beyonders in this pathway are cursed and have crazy characteristics, we don't want to rely on the seven major Churches. We would lose all our freedom, without leaving anything behind."

So that's the case... It's no wonder the Nighthawk's confidential information doesn't have much about this. It even lacked the corresponding Sequences 8 and 7 of Prisoner. It's something I could know based on the level I had at the time... Klein replied with a sense of enlightenment, "I really am not aware of the situation beyond Prisoner."

Maric didn't nod as he looked at Klein with his brown eyes and continued, "Compared to a Prisoner, a Lunatic's greatest characteristic is to be able to autonomously sacrifice their rationality and let their desires run amok in exchange for strength and enhancements in every aspect. Apart from not having clear thoughts during this period, there isn't much of a problem. They can even gain stronger resistances towards Beyonder powers that can disrupt one's thoughts and influence their mind."

To put it simply, I'll get rid of you first, and that will make it impossible for you to kill me... Klein couldn't help but lampoon. "From this Sequence onwards, the curse will gradually appear. Lunatics easily lose control," Maric said as his facial muscles twitched.

Isn't that obvious? If a person's mental state has been operating at a nadir for a long time, or if there are frequent abnormalities, it would be abnormal if the possibility of losing control isn't higher than other Beyonders! Klein had his own understanding of this. He turned to look at Miss Sharron, feeling that it was hard for him to imagine what she would look like when she was in the Prisoner and Lunatic stages. And throughout this, Sharron maintained her ghostly silent and ethereal state.

Seeing that he hadn't said anything, Maric slowly exhaled and said, "The next sequence is Werewolf."

The mutation begins? However, in the eyes of normal people, the crazy Prisoners and the Lunatics who are prone to losing their minds are

actually similar to such mutants... Well, Werewolf being a Sequence 7 is lower than I expected... Klein's thoughts suddenly wandered.

Maric didn't notice how he had gone adrift as he continued on, "A Werewolf is a fully cursed person. Every time the crimson moon becomes full, they will lose part of their sanity, grow black fur, and their bloodlust and desire for tasting blood would reach its peak..."

His voice gradually became a bit erratic, as if he recalled that bitter experience of enduring and repressing himself.

"A Werewolf has rather powerful rejuvenation abilities, as well as terrifying strength, agility, and speed. Their claws and teeth are in no way inferior to Beyonder weapons of the same Sequence, and they contain venom. They also know some darkness-related spells. For instance, targets who are under the Werewolf's control would become subordinates after a period of time, when a Werewolf's venom infiltrates their body for a period of time. They would become a monster like a Werewolf, and typically, these monster's possess very short lifespans..."

After hearing Maric's explanation, Klein made a pertinent conclusion.

At the level of Sequence 7, the Werewolf is above average in terms of actual combat ability.

"A Werewolf who is always unable to suppress their instinct to kill and their bloodlust during a full moon will turn increasingly cold and more twisted. Gradually, they will lose their feelings that a normal human would have," Maric added. There was an undisguised pride in his tone.

It fits Mr. Azik's description of mutants... Klein subconsciously looked at Miss Sharron, instinctively imagining her Werewolf form. However, her cold gaze almost made him shiver, and he quickly turned his head back.

Maric unconsciously licked his lips. It wasn't the seductive kind done by women, but the kind that gave people a sense of danger.

His gaze seemed to momentarily lose focus; leaving his recollections an unknown.

After a few seconds, he opened his mouth again.

"I'm at the corresponding Sequence 6, Zombie."

Zombie... Your outer appearance really does resemble one... It's no wonder you often play cards with a bunch of your own kind. It turns out that you are also a special kind of zombie, a real living zombie... Klein thought for a moment and said, "I heard from Kaspars that you aren't afraid of bullets?"

Maric nodded and said, "My body can be as hard as steel. Even if you used a revolver to fire at my head, I'll only feel dizzy at best. You'll need to shoot me five times in the same spot before you're able to break my defenses.

"And even if you break through my defenses, to a Zombie, all other forms of damage isn't lethal if the brain isn't destroyed.

"And my strength has been raised significantly from the foundation of a Werewolf. Furthermore, I wield a portion of death-related spells and can easily summon zombies and control ghosts. I can direct them and am proficient at using cold and decaying Beyonder powers."

Every Sequence in the Mutant pathway has different characteristics. There are very few changes in the progressive pathway... Klein pondered for a moment and asked, "Then, what about the curse of Zombie?"

Maric clenched his teeth and said, "I will thirst for the warm blood and fresh meat of humans. During the full moon, this state will be particularly serious. The only thing to be gratified about is that a Zombie's curse replaces the Werewolf's and Lunatic's curse. They do not exist together, and it's the same later on.

"Every time the crimson moon is full, I will be in great pain. If I don't give up on self-control, I will be in so much pain that I will lose my ability to fight. And if I indulge myself, I will also become less and less like a human, and the risk of losing control is very high.

"Even in normal times, I would always resist the desires in my heart and the strong malice in my heart."

Phew. Compared to the Beyonders of other Sequences, the others are so much better. Well, except for Abyss and Demoness... Klein suddenly had such a thought.

Maric paused and glanced at Sharron.

Sharron parted her lips and said in an illusory voice, “Sequence 5, Wraith.”

Wraith? There’s such a Sequence? It really is a Mutant pathway... Klein was slightly surprised at first, but then he felt that this was indeed the characteristic of a spirit body that could be easily transformed.

Having received the prompt, Maric added, “After becoming a Wraith, one can turn one’s body into a real wraith and obtain the corresponding powers, such as moving through obstacles, hiding in mirrors, and directly attacking the soul of the enemy. They can jump through most things with reflections.

“And unlike ordinary wraiths, even with Spirit Vision, one will find it difficult to discover such a shadow unless they were a High-Sequence Beyonder.

“Yes, Wraith wields many death-type spells. There are many strange techniques, such as forcefully possessing the body and controlling the enemy...

“Her curse is that on the night of a full moon, she either consumes a certain number of human souls, or she becomes extremely weak. Choosing the former is equivalent to being on the brink of losing control at any moment.”

Without waiting for Klein to speak, the similarly pale Sharron suddenly said, “Our target is also a Wraith.”

“The Beyonder powers of Zombie, Werewolf, Lunatic, and Prisoner won’t be lost as a result of advancement,” Maric emphasized.

It sounds like my nemesis. I’m precisely afraid of the type who are impervious to revolver bullets and do not suffer immense damage when burned by ordinary flames... Simply put, I’m afraid of “ghosts”... Klein felt his heart thump a little.

After pondering for a few seconds, he asked, “What is the effect of the Sealed Artifact?

“Why would they restrain you?”

It actually made you willing to tell me your weaknesses and your curses... Klein had some general guesses.

Maric’s expression was somewhat gloomy as he replied, “That cursed artifact that needs to be sealed is called ‘Scarlet Lunar Corona.’

“Up to a certain range, it can create effects similar to a full moon. For those who are already cold and warped, it would aid them with explosive strength, but we will become weak and lose our ability to fight. If I give up on myself, then I’d rather choose death!” Maric growled hoarsely.

I didn’t expect a perverted and cowardly fellow like you to be a persistent person. Hmm, to be able to last until the Zombie Sequence is indeed extraordinary... Klein didn’t interrupt him and listened to the next part of the story.

“The person who wears the Scarlet Lunar Corona is immune to the effects of the full moon, and they will gain terrifying speed and unimaginable rejuvenation abilities, as well as a number of relatively powerful darkness-related spells. However, it will make the wearer’s blood gradually turn cold. They will freeze up, bit by bit, and if they do not stop in time or drink the blood of a living person, they will ultimately die as their blood freezes up completely.” Maric seemed to greatly fear the Scarlet Lunar Crow.

After he was done, Sharron looked over at Klein with her calm blue eyes.

“Together with Steve are Zombie Jason and Werewolf Tyre.

“But as long as Steve is finished off, the others wouldn’t be a problem.”

Maric added, “If we succeed, the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Steve will be mine. The Scarlet Lunar Corona will belong to Sharron. The remaining spoils of war and the Book of Secrets will be your payment.”

Very generous conditions... Klein almost couldn't believe his ears.

Although the most valuable items are the Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic and the powerful Sealed Artifact with special powers, the rest aren't too bad either!

It's impossible for a Sequence 5 powerhouse to only have Sealed Artifacts provided by the organization, and if any one of the Sequence 6 Zombie and Sequence 7 Werewolf is retained, it will be a bountiful harvest!

Klein leaned back and pretended to think, to suppress the sudden greed in his heart.

"Your conditions are indeed satisfying," he replied and immediately returned with a question. "Who is Shaman King Klarman? What kind of information is recorded in his Book of Secrets?"

Maric rubbed his temples and said, "The Shaman King can both refer to a High-Sequence job and also represent an outstanding person who controls powers in the domains of darkness, the moon, and the strange, one who surpasses his peers. Klarman is the latter, and also the former.

"He was active in the Southern Continent during the early part of the Fifth Epoch, and then he completely disappeared. Maybe he was hunted down by the Church of Death or our secret organization, or maybe he died of old age in some unknown place.

"His Book of Secrets includes knowledge such as secret deeds, rituals, alchemy, astrology, symbolism, natural interaction, and so on. Even if an ordinary person gets it, they can become an expert in the field of mysticism. They can even rely on their own natural spirituality to accomplish a small number of Beyonder matters without taking any potions. Well, the price is that they will slowly become mentally ill. This is the aftermath of one's spirituality being unable to bear the burden."

Sounds good... Just what I need... However, this mission is not only difficult in itself, but there's also a certain amount of subsequent trouble. I'm dealing with a secret organization with a history of over a

thousand years... Klein was silent for a few seconds, but he still chose to follow his heart.

“I wish to have some time to think it over.

“This is a very serious and dangerous matter. I can’t be impulsive.

“I will give you my answer tomorrow morning at nine o’clock. Hmm, come to my house. You know the address.”

He looked at Sharron while finishing the sentence. He suddenly felt nervous when he finished it.

They had revealed so much important secret information, even problems that plagued them. If he didn’t agree on the spot, would he be silenced?

Or would they follow me until I make up my mind?

Then, how can I go above the gray fog to make the divination!?

Sharron, who was wearing a black regal dress, looked at Klein quietly. There was no anger, doubt, or emotion in her blue eyes.

She suddenly pulled out a folded piece of paper from a concealed pocket and unfolded it into a rectangle.

The paper was orange-yellow, with many symbols, including those representing the sun.

These symbols and labels drew out an empty zone, one which gave off a very warm and stable feeling.

As soon as he saw the piece of paper, Klein remembered what it was and relieved his uptight heart.

This was also from Numblewright Master Rosago. This was the Notary Certificate!

Back when they were distributing the spoils of war, Sharron had taken this mystical item!

The pale, delicate Sharron handed the Notary Certificate to Klein and said in a refined voice, “Press your hand here.

“Promise not to divulge what you just heard.” *Phew...*
Klein exhaled and nodded seriously.

“Alright.”

According to the prompt, he took the Notary Certificate and pressed his palm against the blank area. Then, after some deliberation, he opened his mouth and said, “I promise I won’t tell anyone what I just learned from Miss Sharron and Mr. Maric.”

As he said each word, the symbols and magical labels around the Notary Certificate lit up, one by one, giving off a warm and bright glow.

When it was all over, the light turned into a seal-like image that pressed down on Klein’s palm and even passed through it, covering the blank zone.

A warm current passed through him, and Klein felt a subtle but invisible connection between himself and the Notary Certificate.

Back then, the ability mimicked by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom really does belong to a Notary... He suddenly thought of something from before.

“I’m done.” Klein returned the Notary Certificate.

Sharron calmly nodded her head and didn’t say anything else. Her indifferent figure quickly disappeared from the carriage.

Maric, still suppressing the malice in his eyes, tapped the carriage’s wall with his finger.

The carriage slowly stopped, and the door of the carriage opened.

They’re using zombies to drive the carriage and shadows to act as attendants... It really is Maric’s style... After activating his Spirit Vision, Klein took off his cap in enlightenment, pressed it to his chest, bowed slightly, and got off the carriage.

It was a quiet street, one where several of the street lamps were broken, but no one had fixed them.

Klein first went to his one-room apartment in East Borough before returning to 15 Minsk Street and pretended to make two divinations in the living room.

The first time was whether or not he should accept this commission. The second time was whether or not it was dangerous, and how dangerous it was.

As for the answer to the divination, he didn't pay close attention to it, because Wraiths of the Mutant pathway could transform into spirit bodies, allowing them to directly interact with the spirit world to obtain information. In other words, they naturally possessed the power of divination and anti-divination, so regardless of whether it was Sharron or the target Steve, the revelation that Klein received was either wrong or deviated.

After he finished his divination, he read the newspapers and books, as he usually did. He practiced his Beyonder powers in the activity room, then he washed up and went to sleep. There was nothing abnormal about it.

At ten past four in the morning, Klein suddenly woke up and jumped out of bed!

He found a candle, built a wall of spirituality, and quietly began the ritual of summoning himself!

Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog, but he was in no hurry to respond to the prayer.

Sitting in the high back chair belonging to The Fool, Klein focused on the surface of the long bronze table. He saw the AllBlack Eye, Azik's copper whistle, the Black Emperor card, and the dark, majestic figure of Roselle holding a scepter.

The corner of his mouth twitched, and Klein stretched out his right hand to turn the Card of Blasphemy upside down.

What I can't see can't hurt me!

After conjuring a pen and paper, he took off his topaz pendulum and repeated his first two divinations.

The result of the first divination rotated clockwise at an adequate frequency. That was to say that the commission should be accepted, but it also wasn't necessary.

The result of the second divination was the counterclockwise rotation of the topaz pendulum, but it spun with great amplitude and frequency. Klein's interpretation was that there was danger, quite considerable danger, but it wasn't life-threatening yet as long as it was properly dealt with.

Phew... After remaining silent for a few seconds, Klein remembered a hunch from before.

Perhaps, every Magician needs to perform.

Otherwise, the name of the potion would be "Mage," not "Magician."

The key to "never perform unprepared" is to be prepared, as well as to perform... And this may not just be in combat... The two assumptions of "diverting the enemy's attention" and "getting the applause of the audience" is predicated on there being a performance... As long as I can find the appropriate solution, disguise myself well, and deal with it perfectly, it will be hard for the Rose School of Thought to find me... Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind.

Combined with the revelation he had just received from the divination, he quickly came to a decision. Leaning back against The Fool's high back chair, he raised his head to look at the towering ancient palace and the boundless gray fog and revealed a slight smile.

Then, let's have a grand performance.

With that, he took the All-Black Eye and Azik's copper whistle and responded to his own prayers.

The next morning was a Thursday morning.

Klein, who had bought the ingredients early, prepared homemade Feynapotter noodles, which was closer to the noodles mixed with meat sauce. He went to the door to take out today's newspaper from the mailbox.

As he ate, he found a notice of a Beyonder gathering in the Backlund Morning Post.

As expected, once the tense situation is resolved, the gatherings begin... Klein smiled and said to himself.

At nine o'clock, he took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, and took a look. Then, he faced the empty living room and said to the oriel window, "I'm willing to provide help. "The conditions are exactly as you said.

"But that's only if you give me a few more days."

He paused for a moment before replying with a smile, "I need to make some preparations."

Other than Klein, there was no one else in the living room, but suddenly, an illusionary voice rang out.

"Okay.

"After you've finished preparing, you can pay the bar a visit."

...

In Viscount Glaint's study, Audrey was sitting in a chair, helping Susie straighten the fur on the back of her head. She said to Fors and Xio, who were sitting quietly beside her while sipping their wine, "Why were you in such a hurry to bring me here?"

Although this was the first time she had seen Fors and Xio since the incident with Lanevus, she had already paid them through Susie.

Well, after joining us at the Tarot Club, Fors seems to remain unchanged. She's still languid and fond of being snide with Xio, but there are some things about her that are completely different. She used to be dispirited, depressed, and she seemed to hold little hope for the future, but now, that aspect has completely disappeared... Audrey, the Telepathist, smiled faintly and observed the state of Miss Magician with a calm heart.

After downing the rest of the red wine, Fors said, "It is indeed Aurmir, the most famous red wine. It's much better than the ones I've drunk before. The level is very clear and each level has a different feeling."

She put down her wine cup and said, “The gathering that might have the Spectator and clues to the Psychology Alchemists will be held this afternoon.”

“Is that so? Why the rush?” Audrey asked, puzzled.

Fors explained with a smile, “Because the serial killer has wasted too much of everyone’s time. Moreover, that’s the outskirts of North Borough. It’s during the afternoon when the Nighthawks are most relaxed.”

“Okay.” Audrey nodded lightly and didn’t ask any further.

At the same time, her gaze swept across the room, and she sighed silently.

Compared to the past, Xio is a lot quieter compared to the present Fors.

At that moment, Viscount Glaint chuckled and said, “Audrey, I will go with you.”

“Why?” Audrey asked despite knowing the answer.

Glaint cleared his throat and said, “It’s because I’ve already obtained the Apothecary formula. All I need to do is trade for some ingredients. My vault doesn’t have the two corresponding ingredients.

“Oh, Fors sold it to me. 300 pounds. She guarantees that it’s authentic.”

300 pounds... I remember that you bought it from Mr. World for only 230 pounds... Audrey couldn’t help but glance at Fors.

Chapter 333: The Tracker

In the suburbs of North Borough, in a soon-to-be-abandoned three-story medical school building.

Even at three o'clock in the afternoon, the fog and the clouds had already darkened the whole of Backlund, as if a storm was approaching.

Along the dilapidated corridor, the gloomy light shone in diagonally, penetrating the windows and causing everything to appear silent and scarred. It was eerie and terrifying.

This was Audrey's second time here, and she was no longer as nervous and tense as before. She turned her head left and right in her surgical cap and big mask, habitually observing the environment, observing every detail of this place.

Viscount Glaint was walking beside her and gradually turned apprehensive. He couldn't help but whisper, "Why do I find that this place is a little strange...

"Could there be evil ghosts?"

As a mysticism enthusiast who had only half a foot in the Beyonder circle, the only Beyonder phenomenon he had witnessed was Fors's passing through walls and the opening of a door. He was still unsure of the existence of wraiths and shadows.

However, this didn't stop him from being afraid of similar monsters!

Fors turned her head and shot him a glance as she held back her laughter.

"Most of the participants of this gathering are Beyonders. If there really are evil ghosts or spirits, they would definitely be very happy. It usually implies ingredients or servants."

Noticing that Viscount Glaint was obviously relieved, she purposely added, "Of course, I'm only talking about the weaker kind of ghosts. A truly formed shadow might be able to kill everyone here without making a sound. And even if you run, all you can do is run back and

forth between the three stories without being able to leave. It's like entering a maze." Xio nodded in approval.

"I've once encountered a similar wraith. I ran in circles while in the cemetery without any means of escaping. During this process, there were baffled people who would turn their heads for no reason, only to suffer a sudden death. If not for one of the Beyonders carrying a sun charm, perhaps you wouldn't be seeing me here today."

Viscount Glaint shivered as he looked out the window. At this moment, a withered tree branch hit the glass and made a light sound as it was blown by the cold wind.

Glaint almost shouted out loud, as he frantically inched towards the two Beyonders, Fors and Xio.

Audrey resisted smiling and quietly watched this scene from the sidelines. In her heart, she thought, *I have met Mr. Fool who is close to a deity. I know the City of Silver in the Forsaken Land of God, I have heard of all kinds of terrifying monsters in the depths of the darkness. Why would I fear wraiths and shadows?*

However... I really haven't met a ghost yet. Pui! Audrey, what are you thinking? It's better not to come across this kind of thing!

Unless I become a Psychiatrist with Beyonder powers capable of influencing other creatures, or if I obtain mystical items that can restrain ghosts and monsters...

The four of them couldn't help but increase their pace and quickly arrived at the gathering venue for the day.

Before she entered, Fors found an opportunity to bend her back and whisper into Xio's ear, "You did well cooperating with me just now. You actually made up a story so quickly that's enough to frighten others.

"Look at the spots which aren't covered by Viscount Glaint's mask. It's so white that you can't see any colors."

Xio turned her head as she answered blankly, "I didn't make up the story.

“That was something that happened to me before I came to Backlund.”

“...” Fors was stunned for a moment before she blurted out a question, “For real?”

“Why would I lie?” Xio’s puzzled face was obscured by the mask.

Fors turned her head and took two steps forward and suddenly shivered.

At that moment, Glaint didn’t wish to stay in the creepy corridor any longer. He reached out his hand and pushed open the door to the gathering venue.

As the creaking sound echoed, he saw the concrete floor and the smell of antiseptic coming into his nose. It made him frown.

Soon after, he saw a large pool in the middle. It was filled with a clear, yellow liquid, and there were floating figures inside it.

Some of the figures were entirely naked. Some were rather complete while others had half their skin ripped off. They had the brownish auburn colors of beef jerky.

They were corpses!

“Ah!”

A man’s shrill cry resounded in the room.

Gazes were instantly cast onto Glaint.

These gazes were all from the figures in white coats surrounding the pool. They were also wearing surgical caps and huge masks, and only their eyes and a bit of their skin were exposed.

Glaint’s body swayed a bit. He wanted to turn around and run away, but when he saw Audrey, Fors, and Xio pass him, as if nothing had happened, in order to enter his room, he realized that they were pretending that they weren’t his companions.

As he took a deep breath, Glaint nearly vomited.

He looked outside and saw that the corridor was dark and gloomy, filled with shadows, and that there wasn’t a single living soul in sight.

With another shudder, Glaint hastened his steps and caught up with Audrey and the others, finding a place to sit down as far as possible from the pool.

After a few minutes, a figure wearing a white coat stepped out of the line and used a wooden pole with a hook on the side to pull a corpse to the side. Then, he directly dragged the corpse to the concrete floor.

He paused for about three seconds, took out a scalpel, and slit open the body's abdomen.

As the gash deepened, a cold and hoarse voice suddenly sounded from inside.

"Let the gathering begin."

... Glaint reached out with his hand to press down his mask. His throat moved a few times and he almost vomited.

They were midway in the gathering with all kinds of trades— either a success or failure—happening, Audrey, who had been calmly observing all this time, finally opened her mouth and said, "I want the Spectator potion formula."

Before she could finish her sentence, she felt several gazes sweep over her. However, they quickly moved away and didn't linger for long.

After several seconds of silence, the transaction was aborted.

...

Around four in the afternoon, it was getting closer to night.

"Why was there nothing at all..." Glaint didn't maintain his aristocratic demeanor as he slumped against the wooden wall of the carriage and sighed.

This Beyonder gathering had left a deep impression on him, making him feel as if he had taken a huge risk.

But even so, he was still unable to buy the horn of an adult Flying Unicorn and the venom crystal of a Royal Jellyfish.

Fors secretly pursed his lips and said, "That's normal. Although Backlund is the easiest place to get ingredients, if you can't join every

Beyonder gathering, there will still be situations in which you won't be able to find what you want for a long time. It requires either luck or patience."

"Mister Viscount, think about Miss Audrey's Spectator potion. She hasn't received any clues to date."

Sometimes, you can encounter the ingredients, but you would lack the money to buy them... Xio, who was sitting to the side, thought in exasperation.

Audrey consoled Glaint, "When I get back, I'll go to my family's vault and do a search. Maybe there's something you want."

She had brought the Rainbow Salamander's pituitary gland with her today, but she hadn't encountered the spinal fluid of a Farsman Rabbit. Therefore, she had only exchanged it for 320 pounds in cash. It was to prepare for Susie's advancement.

Glaint nodded, and just as he was about to open his mouth, he saw Xio sitting up straight. She frowned and said, "It seems like someone is following us!"

"I trust your intuition. What do we do now?" Fors asked, looking around.

Following us? Why follow us? All we did was sell one Beyonder item and obtain a few hundred pounds in cash. Even if someone wanted to rob us, we shouldn't be the top targets... Although Glaint acted like a rookie, we didn't... In addition, the gathering's organizer had done a lot of things to ensure the safety of the members and to prevent anyone from being followed. Unless... the person who sent the tracker is the organizer! Last time, everything seemed normal. Hmm, what's the difference between the two occasions... Audrey's mind raced when she suddenly came up with an idea.

Perhaps it was my request to purchase the Spectator formula that attracted the attention of the Psychology Alchemists.

It's impossible for them to randomly sell the Spectator formula, so what would inevitably follow is recruitment into the organization.

And recruitment isn't a simple matter. One has to be wary of any quasi-Nighthawks or quasi-Mandated Punishers, or spies sent by other hidden factions.

If they don't observe the target and conduct an investigation, the organization would quickly be destroyed!

After pondering for a few seconds, Audrey said to Fors and the others, "Prepare to be attacked.

"Pretend as though you didn't notice the tracker.

"If we can successfully return to Empress Borough, don't worry about exposing the identities of Glaint and me. Both of you have to leave in secret."

Her green eyes swept over Glaint and she added with a smile, "A lot of people know that we are mysticism enthusiasts, so it's normal for us to find an opportunity to participate in a Beyonder gathering. Even if the tracker is an official Beyonder, they won't suspect anything. We are just regular people, so all they will do is warn us through other channels."

But I'm already at Sequence 8... Phew, in order to come into contact with the Psychology Alchemists, I have to take a little risk... It's likely the official Beyonders won't target me for seeking to purchase a formula. They shouldn't be able to bypass the gathering organizer and track us down. I want to believe in my own judgment! Audrey cheered herself on.

"Okay," Viscount Glaint mumbled as he agreed.

The horse carriage continued on as usual, going in circles a few times. In the end, Audrey and the others changed to another carriage as they had planned.

Throughout this process, the tracker never attacked.

When they reached the back door of Viscount Glaint's mansion in Empress Borough, the two nobles used their usual means of returning. As for Fors and Xio, they each relied on their own skills to leave.

About ten minutes later, Audrey, accompanied by her huge golden retriever, Susie, and her maids, openly left through the front door, in her own carriage.

As she listened to the sound of rolling wheels, she was unable to confirm if there were still people following her. She could only let her thoughts wander.

It's obvious that the daughter of Earl Hall isn't a spy of any Beyonder faction...

There's nothing wrong with her past...

Her love for mysticism is well-known...

Her status and identity can provide assistance that's different from other people...

Perhaps, in two days, there will be members of the Psychology Alchemists who will try to come into contact with me... Audrey thought with some anticipation and some nervousness.

...

Although he said he was making preparations, Klein spent two days at the Quelaag Club as if nothing had happened. He even played a game of cards with the equestrian teacher, Talim, and the others, winning a few soli.

Before he went to bed, he didn't forget to visit the outside of Lawyer Jurgen's house to make sure if there were no lights and to feed the cat.

At eight o'clock on Friday night, he put on his iron mask and wore his black-hooded robe and entered the activity room of Old Mister Eye of Wisdom.

The only candle flickered its yellow flame, casting shadows on the walls around the activity room.

Klein found the most convenient escape point before surveying his surroundings. He saw the Eye of Wisdom with his deep cheek lines and the plump Apothecary.

Well, after another comparison, even though he's wearing an iron mask that covers half his face, it's still pretty clear that he was the man I met at Rice Circus who deserves a beating... Klein looked away and waited for the gathering to officially begin. The woman who had an Artisan backing her was very hidden among the participants, so he couldn't be sure that she was present before she spoke.

After a few minutes, Eye of Wisdom raised his head to look at the mechanical clock on the wall and chuckled.

"There's a lot of people here today."

"Let's begin."

Before he finished speaking, the plump Apothecary rushed to speak.

"I need a Beyonder creature for an experiment. It's best if it's an animal, and it's best if it's already restrained and one that's not too dangerous."

A beast-type Beyonder creature? Klein was slightly moved.

He remembered what the Apothecary had said in the circus theater and that he was apparently able to read the thoughts of beasts.

He's just an Apothecary; yet, he poses such an ability and is even looking to purchase a beast-type Beyonder creature. Hmm, after I sold him the Spring of Elves marrow crystal, he should've gathered the ingredients and advanced to the next Sequence... In other words, the Sequence after Apothecary has something to do directing wild beasts? Klein made a deduction based on the information he knew.

At this moment, someone responded to the Apothecary with a sneer, "Who would keep a Beyonder creature by their side?

“It’s dangerous and easily discovered. Wouldn’t it be easier and more concealed to kill them to obtain its Beyonder ingredients?”

The Apothecary was a person who refused to lose in a spar of words, so he immediately sneered.

“What a foolish thought!

“You can’t guarantee that the Beyonder ingredient on a Beyonder creature is exactly what you need and that you can definitely sell it. You might as well tame it and direct it to be your helper, increasing your strength severalfold...”

As he spoke, his voice gradually grew softer. He felt as if he had revealed some important secret.

Damn it! Why can’t I control this mouth of mine! The Apothecary figuratively smacked himself in the heart.

As expected... Klein nodded indiscernibly.

Without a doubt, the Apothecary’s request wasn’t met. Most of the participants here were Low-Sequence Beyonders, and their statuses in Backlund weren’t very prominent. With the need for them to be relatively alert, to the point of barely maintaining it, so how was it possible for them to extravagantly rear a Beyonder creature?

Furthermore, more importantly, there was the fact that wild Beyonder creatures were usually hostile to humans. Any encounter would usually lead to one dead, so if one wanted to capture them alive, they would need to have a sufficiently strong team or be strong enough to overwhelm the enemy. Of course, this didn’t exclude particular Beyonders who possessed special abilities that were suitable for such situations.

After a bout of disappointment, the Apothecary coughed lightly and said, “I’ve brought quite a few bottles of medicine. All of you know the effects. If you want them, you can speak up when the gathering is almost over.”

The few medicines to treat wounds, go berserk, and increase one’s ability in that aspect? Klein silently lampooned. He chuckled and provided a suggestion.

"You can purchase a Sequence 9 formula, find the corresponding Beyonder ingredients, and then concoct the potion to feed the animal you fancy. This way, you will have a Sequence 9 Beyonder creature, and you can also continuously advance it with the subsequent potions.

"Of course, that's built on the premise that you are rich enough and can deal with the defective ones that lose control."

The Apothecary was stunned for a few seconds. After a while, he said, "How extravagant."

"Just saving up money and finding the Beyonder ingredients for myself is difficult enough for me. It's also a high probability event for an animal to lose control after they consume potions. It will take me several times before I succeed.

"Someone who can do this must have a mine or owns a bank."

Our Tarot Club's Miss Justice likely rears a Beyonder creature... Klein suddenly felt sorry for the Apothecary.

If one wanted to disregard it for the sole purpose of earning money, Apothecaries were the easiest among the Low-Sequence Beyonders to amass large amounts of wealth. The problem was that they were also easily targeted by the official Beyonders.

After a few more deals or failed transactions, Klein heard a voice that was deliberately suppressed, "I only brought one Beyonder weapon this time."

"They are fifty bullets with different effects. Twenty of them are engraved with the sun domain's labels and symbols, forming a complete charm. They can be used to purify ghost-related monsters. They cause more damage to wraiths and shadows, so they are called purifying bullets. There are another twenty bullets which are meant for corrupted creatures, known as demon hunting bullets. The other ten are bullets that counter evil-type monsters, known as exorcism bullets. Their effects can be maintained for eighteen months or more.

"Fifty bullets for 500 pounds or the Barbarian potion formula. It will come with a revolver with the matching caliber."

They did make related bullets according to my suggestions from last time. From the looks of it, they're more complicated than ordinary Beyonder weapons. It took them so long only to make a set... Klein didn't give the others a chance and directly said, "I have the Barbarian potion formula."

At this moment, a rather tall man offered a price.

"550 pounds."

In this day and age, a revolver was the most convenient Beyonder weapon to use and carry!

The well-hidden lady's voice was filled with unquenchable joy as she said, "Sir, I'm sorry. I have a preference for the Barbarian formula."

"600 pounds." The man raised the offer again.

"No, this is not about money." The woman with an Artisan backing her glanced at Klein. "Deal! But please pass the formula to Old Mister Eye of Wisdom for his notarization."

Phew, it's a good thing that I got the Black Emperor card. Otherwise, if I met someone who can raise the price so ruthlessly, I definitely would've lost a lot of money today... Klein rolled up his robe, took out the Barbarian formula which he had long written from his inner pocket, and opened it to take a look.

"Sequence 8 Barbarian. Main ingredients: Grass of Madness, core horn crystal of a Land Rhinoceros. Supplementary ingredients: One deep-grained Walnut, one Fragrance Hornet Grass, 10 ml of the extract obtained from soaking poplar bark, 100 ml of liquor."

After confirming that it was correct, Klein folded the paper and handed it to the attendant.

Just like before, Eye of Wisdom took out the ring that was inlaid with many small diamonds. He mimicked the Beyonder powers of a Notary and confirmed that the formula was true.

Hearing this old man declare that "the formula is valid," the woman with the Artisan backing her heaved a sigh of relief and took out a square iron box the size of a palm.

After the attendant passed the formula to her, she eagerly rolled it open and read it a few times, as if she wanted to memorize it directly. As for Klein, he snapped open the box and looked at it.

There were three piles of bullets inside the metal box. One pile had a faint golden luster, as though they had just been fished out of hot water; the other was entirely silver and covered with patterns, cold yet sacred. The pile with the fewest bullets suffused a golden sheen amidst the brass color. He could vaguely see several labels and symbols engraved on it.

Yes, it's authentic... Klein had the ability to appraise the bullets in the field of mysticism. He snapped the lid shut and stored the item in the pocket under his robe.

As for the free revolver, it was nothing special. The body of the gun was a deeper brass color, and the handle was made out of walnut wood.

Since his underarm holster had also been lost back when he encountered the police inspection, Klein had to attach the revolver to his waist and cover it with his clothes.

After finishing the transaction, he looked around the activity room and deliberately raised his voice.

"I need strong purifying items like Sun Holy Water and Sun Sacred Emblem.

"I can buy it in gold, or I can use formulas as a barter, like the Sequence after Barbarian—Briber.

"Of course, if there are any questions regarding the mysticism and the Beyonder world that requires answering, I can also give it a try, but I can't guarantee that I can answer it."

As the Apothecary listened, he widened his eyes. He had a feeling that this was that "lucky lad."

However, he had just become a Beyonder not long ago, so how could he have obtained so many valuable things? The more he thought about it, the more he gnashed his teeth, feeling as if he had made the wrong choice back then.

Luck was the most important thing!

The woman who had bought the Barbarian formula couldn't control herself and almost said in her original voice, "I don't have anything you need, but I can pay you in cash. Eight hundred pounds!"

Klein swallowed the word "deal" that he nearly said. He thought for a moment before chuckling.

"I'm only accepting bartering for the time being.

"I will most likely be back for the next gathering. You can seek out the relevant items in advance."

For the time being... The lady ruminated over the word and nodded slowly.

"Alright."

After that, no one else said anything, and Klein's needs were also not met. In Backlund, in the Loen Kingdom, the worshipers of the Eternal Blazing Sun could be considered heretics, so few of such items circulated beyond official channels.

Klein was slightly disappointed, but he wasn't too concerned. He had an alternative plan.

He clearly remembered that Miss Xio had once sought out a Beyonder believer of the Eternal Blazing Sun for purification!

And the lady who craved the Briber formula would definitely be actively looking for his desired items.

Klein stopped talking and listened to the subsequent exchanges.

When the gathering was coming to an end, an average built participant with no special characteristics pinched the iron mask on his face and said with a deep baritone voice, "I need an adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland."

An adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland? Sounds familiar. I seem to have heard of it somewhere... Klein frowned slightly. Without using divination, he tried hard to recall where.

Suddenly, he remembered the source of the familiar feeling.

It was one of the main ingredients for the Demoness of Pleasure!

"Pleasure" was Sequence 6 of the Demoness pathway. Klein had obtained its complete formula back when he channeled Madam Sharon's spirit. Although it was usually difficult to recall the exact details, and he had to rely on the help of dream divination to recall the memory, just hearing the main ingredient was enough to give him a sense of familiarity and make him form connections.

He couldn't help but glance over at the buyer, confirming that he was male in terms of skin color, figure, voice, and unmasked facial features.

The Sequence prior to Demoness of Pleasure is Witch. Regardless of their gender, as long as they pass that, they would all become women. This person clearly isn't one... He hasn't become a Witch yet, so why is he purchasing the main ingredient of a Demoness of Pleasure? Hmm... Could he be helping someone buy it? Is he the ally of some Witch or a loyal subordinate?

However, as a rather ancient secret organization, the Demoness Sect shouldn't be lacking in the corresponding ingredients. With their natural disposition, it would be normal for them to use the Beyonder characteristics left behind by former members to concoct the potions... Did the Witch behind the buyer lose her connection with the organization?

With these thoughts, Klein had the impulse to follow him.

However, after careful consideration, he gave up on this idea. Ignoring the question on how he could bypass the precautionary measures of Eye of Wisdom and lock onto the other party's tracks, just the fact that the other party's situation was unknown, and with him not having the time to perform a divination, it was enough for him to choose to follow his heart's wishes.

What if there isn't only one Witch, but a Beyonder who's much stronger?

Moreover, it's a good thing for Witches to advance to Demoness of Pleasure. The former would cause calamities and harm many innocent people, but once they advance to the latter, their goal would be focused

on pleasure. In simple terms, society would be less dangerous... Klein mumbled.

An adult Black Widow Spider Silk Gland was already considered to be relatively expensive and a rare Beyonder ingredient. It was just like the Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland and the Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow which Klein needed in order to ascend to Sequence 6. It was almost equivalent to the cost of half a house in the capital, so the buyer didn't receive a satisfactory response.

To be precise, no one responded.

The atmosphere of the gathering fell silent until the plump Apothecary started selling the medicine he brought.

After the previous trials, he received quite a few repeat customers. In less than three minutes, he had sold all the goods he could sell and collected more than fifty pounds in cash.

As Eye of Wisdom announced the end of the gathering, each participant left through different passages in a different order and at different intervals.

Klein was in the middle, and after he reached a secluded street, he took off his disguise and immediately set off for East Borough, arriving at Black Palm Street on that cold and foul-smelling night. On the way, he had purchased an underarm holster. He entering his rented one-bedroom apartment.

Without taking a break, he took out his revolver and opened the metal box containing the Beyonder bullets. He then took out two purifying bullets, two demon hunting bullets, and one exorcism bullet. Then, he loaded them one by one into the chamber.

Taking a pose, he tested the feeling and whether he could fire normally. Klein inserted the revolver into his armpit and busied himself with other preparations.

For example, he checked to see if there was anything unusual about the All-Black Eye in the iron cigar case. He also placed Azik's copper whistle in the metal box containing the bullets, and with the help of

Holy Night Powder, he created a sealed wall of spirituality that stuck to the surface of the box, completing the shielding of the ancient, delicate copper whistle.

After confirming the shapes and positions of the three charms, Klein headed above the gray fog for divination. Then, he put on his cap and went out again.

His target was 32 Verdi Street which was south of the bridge. It was where the thief had found the Master Key!

There might be clues to the Apprentice formula or clues to related items there. It was somewhere that Klein had long wanted to explore, but he suspected that the man who died a tragic death had turned into a wraith-like creature. He didn't dare to take action until he bought purifying bullets.

A Magician never performs unprepared!

Before the steam subway—the most economical mode of transport—had stopped running, Klein arrived south of the bridge before transferring to a public carriage and arrived near Verdi Street.

It was already late at night, and a chilling drizzle filled Backlund. There were barely any pedestrians on the street, and the light from the gas lamps was blurred by the liquid on the glass, making everything seem dreamlike.

Klein circled the area and observed Unit 32's situation. He walked to its side, climbed to the second floor, and easily entered the target's interior from the balcony door which clearly couldn't be closed by the thief from before.

He didn't bring the Master Key, fearing that the item would cause an abnormal chain reaction here.

The layout of the house was very normal. A corridor that connected the two balconies ran through the entire second floor. There were bedrooms, a bathroom, a solarium, and an activity room lining the sides.

With the help of the crimson moonlight shining in from the balcony, Klein saw that all the doors had been opened. All kinds of items were thrown on the ground in disarray.

It should be the result from the thief from before. He couldn't take away all the items, so he could only search for the most valuable ones... However, with the Master Key, there's no need for him to open doors... Klein went through the rooms, one by one, looking for things that might be involved with mysticism.

After an unknown period of time, a black-gloved Klein arrived at the staircase without any success.

Just as he took two steps forward, a figure suddenly appeared before him!

The figure was pressed against the wall at the corner of the stairs, its back was facing Klein. Its black hair was so thick that it almost covered its neck.

Klein, who had long activated his Spirit Vision didn't even have time to observe, for the figure suddenly moved!

His neck creaked as he turned his head while his back remained facing the second floor!

Amidst the hazy, weak, and illusory crimson illumination, the figure's eyes were bulging out of their sockets, filled with fear.

Thud! Thud!

The two eyeballs hit the ground.

Bang!

The figure's head fell off its neck and hit the wooden staircase.

He's long dead; he's without any spirituality glow... Klein watched and judged calmly, as though what had just happened was a farce.

He guessed from the details of the man's old black clothes and the number of rooms open on the second floor, and he decided that this was another burglar, one who had visited the house after the previous one.

Unfortunately, he wasn't that lucky.

Could it be that the Master Key was actually restraining the "danger" here, and when it was taken away, pandemonium was set loose? Klein drew his revolver, adjusted the chamber to the firing position, and cocked the revolver. He walked up the stairs to the corpse.

He squatted down and examined it briefly, but he couldn't find anything other than the fact that his neck had been twisted.

After pondering for a few seconds, Klein straightened his body and carefully went down the stairs. Even though he was standing on a wooden staircase, he didn't make any creaking sounds.

One step, two steps, three steps. After walking down the flight of stairs, he reached the ground.

In front of him was a corridor that connected the two sides. The crimson moonlight shone in, outlining the outline of the balcony. The doors on both sides of the corridor were wide open, revealing a messy scene of scattered items. There was no living room, dining room, or kitchen here.

This is the second floor!

Klein went down from the second floor, only to return to the second floor!

Throughout the entire process, he didn't discover anything out of the ordinary!

Klein didn't panic as he slowly turned around. Behind him, there was a staircase leading downwards!

That is to say, my special ability can only resist the invasion of my Beyonder powers through the use of Beyonder powers such as dreams and spirit channeling, or for me to realize that the environment I'm in does not belong to the real world... I'll still be influenced by hallucinations... Klein took out his matchbox and took out a few matches with his gun-carrying hand.

He continued down, throwing a match down every few steps.

Once again Klein came to the corner of the stairs and saw the dead body with its head separated from its body.

At this moment, a cold wind blew across the back of his neck, causing his hair to stand on end.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers, and a red flame soared from behind him, soaring toward the ceiling.

Those flames seemed to be a monster that was baring its fangs and brandishing its claws, but the flames didn't burn anything.

Klein was about to turn around and look with his Spirit Vision when his body suddenly froze, as if he had fallen into a lake frozen in winter.

He couldn't help but tremble as his left hand was slowly reaching for his neck as he forcibly "suppressed" it.

At that moment, Klein sighed softly.

He forced his left hand into his pocket, removed the wall of spirituality, and opened the metal box containing the bullets.

Next, he held Azik's copper whistle, took it out, shook it, and threw it into the air above the stairs!

In almost an instant, he felt the coldness and stiffness in his body disappear.

In his spiritual perception, a sinister and cold mass leaped out like a dog fetching a ball as it pounced at Azik's copper whistle!

Klein smiled, raised his right hand, aimed at the copper whistle, and pulled the trigger. He softly said, "Bye bye." *Bang!*

The pale gold purifying bullet flew out and accurately hit that cold and indistinct object.

A blood-curdling screech sounded out as the golden flames outlined a human's silhouette in midair!

Under the bright and warm light, all the coldness and evilness quickly disappeared.

Clang!

Azik's copper whistle landed on the ground, bounced a few times, and rolled to the living room on the first floor.

When Klein looked around, he saw that things were now significantly different. For example, the head of the corpse wasn't separated from its body. He had strangled himself with his own hands.

Heh, it really is easy when you're prepared... Klein chuckled and went down the stairs again. He successfully reached the first floor and picked up Azik's copper whistle. He then swung it twice to see if there were any other wraiths or shadows here.

After confirming that there were no more problems, he decided to head straight to the basement.

As he walked down the flight of stairs and went through the door, he saw the picture he had seen in his dream divination. He saw the brown notebook on the long table.

Other than the Master Key and the silver pocket watch with inlaid diamonds which were taken by the thief, this place is still in the same state as what I'd seen in my dream... Klein looked around and saw black iron pots, glass jars, and bronze lampstands that had candles which had long since been extinguished.

His Spirit Vision and spiritual perception told him that these were all very ordinary items. They didn't carry the slightest trace of a spiritual luster.

Hmm, but compared to before, there's still something extra... Klein reached out with his left black-gloved palm and touched the surface of the long table.

His fingers were immediately stained with visible dust.

After carefully carefully and making some preliminary divinations, Klein failed to find any secret chambers or hidden compartments; thus, he turned his attention to the brown notebook.

Carefully flipping through it, the contents of the first page entered his eyes.

"This will go into the annals of the rise of a cursed family!

"I want to remember every key point! Future descendants, please remember every word that I've said!"

...It's a pity that you lost control and died just moments after taking the Sequence 9 potion. The illustrious glory of the Abraham family can only remain as words... Klein lampooned under his breath and continued reading, quickly flipping through the pages.

He planned to take the notebook away once he confirmed its value, not planning to stay any longer.

"We, the Abraham family, were one of the most powerful nobles of the Fourth Epoch, and we were the main supporters of the Tudor Dynasty. In that era, be it Loen's Augustus family, Feysac's Einhorn family, Intis's Sauron family, or Feynapotter's Castiya family, all of them looked up to us.

“Indeed, they weren’t weak back then, but we were stronger!

“Even the rumored Antigonus family and the Zaratul families were slightly weaker than us.

“Unfortunately, the glory of our family disappeared in the War of the Four Emperors. Ancestor Bethel went missing in that war where the deities personally fought. The remaining HighSequence Beyonders all perished.

“Ever since then, our Abraham family has been under a terrible curse. Generations after generations of ancestors have attempted to revive our family, but without exception, all of them went mad and lost control. Some of them did so just before becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder or at Sequence 7 and 8.

“And every case of losing control brings about a disaster that is close to annihilating the family. The accursed forget the family name carved in their bloodlines and hurt the other members of the family without restraint. They were already monsters!

“For the continuation of the family, the Abraham family made a painful decision to no longer live together. Instead, it split up into small families that migrated to various parts of the Northern Continent. That way, even if someone lost control and started a massacre, their bloodline wouldn’t be cut off because of this.

“My father was afraid of the curse, so he chose to remain as an ordinary person. If it wasn’t for the fact that the bloodline’s last name is still ever shining, he wouldn’t even be willing to tell me these things.

“I want to record this down. I want to keep it on my mind. I want to remember the glory and the disaster of the Abraham family.”

Every Beyonder generation would eventually lose control without exception? The curse of the Abraham family is even more terrifying than that of the City of Silver... Wait a minute, they should all be from the Apprentice pathway. Could it be that they heard that Mr. Door’s plea for help? This... this isn’t a cry for help; it’s clearly a life-depriving curse!

However, according to Miss Magician's description, it isn't because she became an Apprentice that she had heard those illusory ravings during the full moon, but because of her use of the bracelet on her wrist. Afterwards, she couldn't escape the ravings regardless of whether she wore it or not.

And what's the reason for those Beyonders of the Abraham family? Perhaps the curse has nothing to do with Mr. Door?

Well, the notebook mentioned that the ancestor of the Abraham family, Bethel Abraham had disappeared in the War of the Four Emperors. Could he be Mr. Door? He was banished from the real world, lost in the darkness, and left trapped in a storm?

There's a possibility that the easiest target to ask for help would naturally be descendants from the same bloodline who are of the same Beyonder pathway but of a relatively lower Sequence. It's a pity that because all the powerful Beyonders had perished, his shouts only bring about a curse on the family that has lasted for more than a thousand years, almost causing the whole Abraham family to disappear...

Is this the reason why Mr. Door is so aware of the history of the Fourth Epoch and the details of the War of the Four Emperors?

If my suspicions are true, I can only exclaim:

The Abrahams really are an unfortunate family!

I wonder if the things mentioned by the owner of the notebook were affected by the passage of time of over a thousand years and the separation of the family, which might result in discrepancies... In the War of the Four Emperors, the deities actually personally participated in battle? Klein slightly frowned, and the speed at which he flipped the pages became faster and faster.

...

"...Father, who chose to remain an ordinary person, ultimately succumbed to his disease. This dealt my mother a huge blow and she quickly departed with him.

"And that means I'm free.

“But what hurts me is that Father didn’t tell me many things about Beyonders to prevent me from embarking down the cursed path. I have to come into contact with them myself and understand them.

“Thankfully, he didn’t violate the orders of the elder. He still handed me the potion formula of Apprentice, Trickmaster, and Astrologer at his deathbed.

“I will repeat the three formulas to prevent myself from forgetting.

“Sequence 9, Apprentice...

“Sequence 8, Trickmaster...

“Sequence 7, Astrologer...”

After Klein saw that, he pricked his eyebrows slightly, feeling that the trip tonight had been worthwhile, and that he hadn’t wasted the purifying bullet.

Of course, he still had to go above the gray fog to confirm its authenticity.

Astrologer... The Apprentice pathway actually has a divination series job as well... In that case, one of my speculations from the past might be closer to the truth. The Seer pathway and the Apprentice pathway might be interchangeable at high Sequences... Klein nodded slightly and continued to flip through the pages.

Although he had already determined the value of the notes, he didn’t want to leave the scene for the time being.

If the last few pages of the notebook noted that something had been hidden somewhere, he would definitely have to come back again. Since that was the case, why go through so much trouble?

As the pages turned, Klein roughly figured out the Beyonder history of this Abraham descendant.

After his parents died, he began trying to touch base with the mysticism circles to gather information about the Sequence potions and purchase the corresponding Beyonder ingredients.

After two years of hard work, recording many still unconfirmed mysticism knowledge, he finally succeeded and concocted the Apprentice potion.

At the end of the notebook, he wrote:

"According to my knowledge of mysticism, the spirit world and the real world would overlap the most on the night of the full moon. That is the time when one's spirituality is at its best, and it is also the most suitable time to consume the potion and advance.

"I will become an Apprentice by the next full moon!

"I need to get stronger, step by step, and reproduce the illustrious glory of the Abraham family!

"Once I reach Sequence 7, I'll be able to contact the elders according to the regulations set by the family.

"I know the method of communication well, so this is a secret that cannot be recorded."

Take a potion to advance yourself during the full moon? Klein was stunned for a moment. He couldn't help but tap his chest four times in a clockwise manner to draw the crimson moon.

"May the Goddess forgive you for your ignorance."

Klein vaguely understood why the man had lost control on the spot!

According to his speculation, the curse that had plagued the Abraham family for more than a thousand years was probably related to Mr. Door's call for help during the full moon.

And that guy actually chose to consume the Apprentice potion on the night of the full moon.

In that case, it was highly likely that he would hear that illusory mumbles while the effects of the potion had yet to fade, and his spirituality was in a very unstable state.

As such, he exploded with a bang...

Fortunately, the "Hornacis... Flegrea..." that I heard back then wasn't lethal... Klein subconsciously sighed.

Then, he thought of the oddity of the Master Key and vaguely came up with a hunch.

The formation of the Master Key stems not only from the condensation of an Apprentice's Beyonder characteristic but also from Mr. Door's illusory ravings. Thus, the occasional problem of causing the holder to be lost becomes rather dangerous. It often allows the holder to enter inappropriate situations!

This can be considered a kind of curse!

And taking everything into consideration, Mr. Door being the ancestor of the Abraham family, Bethel, is quite possible.

Phew... Klein exhaled when he saw that there was no information about any hidden treasures. He took the brown notebook and left the basement.

As he dropped Azik's copper whistle, he retraced the same path he took to get there. When he reached the balcony, he raised his left hand and snapped his fingers.

The scattered matches on the stairs lit up with a crimson light.

They soon extinguished, leaving only minor burn marks.

...

After taking a detour to East Borough to get rid of his disguise, Klein returned to Minsk Street before midnight.

He went above the gray fog and used spirit dowsing to confirm the authenticity of the three formulas.

Soon after, he tried to conjure the fake World opposite him on the mottled long table.

Klein was about to manipulate him when he suddenly raised his hand and smacked his forehead.

I almost forgot!

I brought the All-Black Eye back to the real world...

After going through the trouble, he made The World appear in the majestic palace and changed the surroundings to look like that of an ordinary room.

Then, he made The World pose piously as he said with a hoarse voice, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era...

“Please tell Miss Magician that I’ve already obtained the Trickmaster potion formula.

“I hope that she can exchange it for items in the Sun domain which are good at purification and exorcism. If the value isn’t equal, then I’m willing to make up for it with additional gold pounds.”

After manipulating The World, Klein turned the scene into a ball of light and transmitted it to the crimson star representing The Magician.

He clearly remembered that during the last time Miss Xio had found someone to purify and exorcise her, Miss Magician had also been present!

Fors flipped through the calendar on her desk and used a pen to mark the date of the upcoming full moon.

She had decided that, as soon as she heard that horrible, illusory raving, she would chant the name of The Fool and pass the painful minutes above the gray fog.

Life is truly filled with things to look forward to... She closed the novel in her hands, ready to turn off the iron grille gas lamp that was set into the wall.

At that moment, a flash appeared in front of Fors's eyes. She saw the boundless gray fog and a lofty figure that resided in a majestic ancient palace, as well as a man who was praying devoutly.

When the voice reached her ears, she almost jumped, feeling both alarmed and joyful.

The Trickmaster formula that I've been arduously searching for all these years has been found just like that?

I participated in so many different Beyonder gatherings and failed to find any clues to the Trickmaster formula; yet, it has been found just like that?

And not even a week has passed since I made the request!

Th-this is the Tarot Club... As expected, it's not something ordinary Beyonder gatherings can compare with! Fors sighed with emotion, and endured her excitement and joy as she cautiously responded, "Mr. Fool, is that formula authentic?"

"Yes." The Fool, who was sitting on the high back chair and looking down, replied calmly.

Fors suddenly clenched her fist and secretly pumped it by her waist twice. Almost without any hesitation, she asked, "That was Mr. World, right?

"Please tell him that I will find what he needs as soon as possible."

When the gray fog dissipated and everything was over, Fors remained stunned for two seconds. She couldn't suppress her excitement as she stood up to pace back and forth in her room.

The Sun's domain, items that are good at purification and exorcism... I encountered them only twice in the past. But they were bought by others. They might not be willing to offer them again... Yes, back at Mr. A's gathering, Xio had hired a devotee of the Eternal Blazing Sun to perform a purification and exorcism ritual. He's at least Sequence 7, and he should have the relevant items. Or perhaps, he grasps key clues to them... I just wonder how much it'll cost. Although Mr. World promises to pay the difference, I might not be able to come up with the amount needed for the initial payment... Fors's thoughts gradually shifted to her financial situation.

She now had 370 pounds in cash, mainly earned from what Viscount Glaint had paid for the Apothecary formula. She also had 510 pounds in her bank account, which added up to nearly 900 pounds.

As for something similar, it can go as high as 2,000 pounds, while the cheapest might cost from 500 to 600 pounds; yet, it might not necessarily be the kind of item that Mr. World needs... What if I run into a suitable item but don't have enough money? Get a loan from the bank, or a loan from an usury with a higher interest rate? As long as all goes well, then when Mr. World pays the difference, my debt will easily be repaid... Maybe I could borrow from Miss Audrey for a few days. She usually never cares about money, so she will definitely not collect any interest... Fors quickly came up with a solution.

Just then, Xio, who had gone to somewhere secluded at night to practice her combat skills, returned to their rented two bedroom apartment. Seeing that the lights were still on in her room, she knocked on the door and asked, "Are you pulling an all-nighter to write the beginning of your new book?

"Eh, Fors, you seem really happy. Did the publisher increase your rates?"

“No, no, no.” Fors was slightly taken aback before she forced a smile. “I just received a piece of information that’s suspected to be a clue to the Trickmaster potion formula.”

“Really? Your waiting has finally paid off!” Xio totally didn’t notice Fors’s hidden oddity.

Seeing her good friend so happy for her, Fors couldn’t help but sigh to herself.

I’m already a member of a secret organization. From that moment forth, I’ve taken on a fate that requires me to constantly hide and lie to my friends...

Is this the price—one out of many—to be paid?

...

Saturday morning. Klein once again visited Inventor Leppard at St. George Borough’s Sird Street.

Since the bicycle had yet to be patented, he only paid the last twenty pounds and exhorted Leppard not to rush to talk about subsequent investments and partnerships until he had the patent.

With regards to this, Leppard was very agreeable. He had been tricked twice before for the same reason—before getting a patent, once the potential investors who he had made contact with had fully understood his product, he was kicked aside to watch as the potential investor bribed the patent office and acquired the patent first.

After leaving Leppard’s place, Klein arrived at Isengard Stanton’s place in Hillston Borough at the appointed time. It was a dark and gloomy house.

Today was the day that the rewards for the serial murder were going to be disbursed!

Walking through the living room and into the activity room, Klein saw the two detectives he was more familiar with, Kaslana and Stuart, and sat down next to the latter.

“Sherlock, how much do you think we’ll get this time? It should be no less than protecting Adol. Of course, I didn’t do much, so what I can

receive will be limited. Emperor Roselle once said, 'the more plowing and weeding, the better the crop.'" Stuart clenched his fist and held it to his bearded chin.

Klein guessed with interest.

"The split might go as high as a few hundred pounds, and even the lowest wouldn't be less than 10 pounds."

And I'm the one that will get the higher end of the split... If Isengard Stanton's words were as credible as he had described... Klein added in his stirred heart.

At that moment, a white-shirted, brown-vested Isengard, with white hair at his temples and a thinly contoured face, entered the activity room while carrying his signature pipe. As the fireplace burned, he sat down in a reclining chair and said with a smile, "Ladies and gentlemen.

"I just got back from the Backlund police station. They acknowledged our contribution, and they think we've been instrumental in cracking the case.

"Although we didn't participate in the subsequent capture, we can still obtain half the bounty.

"In other words, we'll split a thousand pounds in cash!

"This is considered quite a handsome bounty, even in Backlund. A single detective has to have zero expenses—not eating or drinking, and even resorting to sleeping on the streets—for four or five years to amass this amount."

The atmosphere in the living room immediately became relaxed. Everyone was filled with anticipation about the reward they would receive.

Even Klein was no exception as he guessed the amount Isengard would give him.

It should be at least a hundred pounds, right? he whispered silently.

Isengard took a puff on his pipe, narrowed his eyes, and said in a satisfied tone, "Everyone, thank you for your trust in me. I will now do the splitting.

“The biggest contributor this time was Detective Sherlock Moriarty. The ideas and train of thoughts that he provided us had allowed us to find more clues and put us on the right track. He’s a genuine expert at deduction!

“Ma’am Kaslana can bear testament to this. I still have a few letters from Detective Moriarty, and anyone in doubt can take a look.”

That’s very fair... He actually didn’t list himself as the biggest contributor... Klein turned to the great detective, Isengard Stanton, and viewed him in a different light.

It’s no wonder that he has such authority in the detective circle!

Seeing that there were no objections, Isengard nodded and said, “I declare that Detective Sherlock Moriarty will be awarded 300 pounds!”

Immediately, the detectives in the activity room broke out into whispers.

From time to time they looked up at Klein, as if they finally recognized this brilliant detective whom Mr. Stanton had praised as an expert at deduction.

What a generous man, a just man... Klein grinned and ultimately didn’t act modestly.

In second place were Isengard himself and Kaslana, who each received 160 pounds, while the rest of the detectives split the remaining 380 pounds depending on their respective contributions. Even the lowest received 15 pounds, equivalent to three or four weeks of their usual earnings. This was the benefit of handling a major case with a high bounty.

Stuart, who had received forty pounds, was very pleased because he felt that he had only done two days of observation. Furthermore, the subject he observed ended up not being the final confirmed suspect.

Of course, he also had to pay a portion of the forty pounds—all informants and helpers involved in the matter had to be paid.

After distributing the bounty, Stuart suddenly remembered something. He took out a piece of paper from his pocket and said to Klein, “Sherlock, I’ve recently accepted a missing person assignment that pays a lot. Try using your resources and help me pay attention to it. If the person is found, I won’t forget your share.”

“Sure, no problem,” Klein replied indifferently.

Stuart handed over the piece of paper and said, “It’s this man.

He’s been missing for nearly two weeks.

“As he’s involved in some improper conduct or might even border on committing a crime, the client doesn’t wish for us to seek the police’s help.”

Klein nodded slightly and unfolded the paper. He saw a blackand-white photo that was made through lithography.

It was a man with hair that was combed back in a slanted fashion, and there was a certain elegance in his propriety.

He was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight-years-old. He had a handsome appearance, but there was an undisguised air of arrogance between his eyes. His nose was high, and his lips were thin.

“Right, his name is...” Stuart recalled and said, “Emlyn White.”

Emlyn White... Klein suddenly turned his head to look at Stuart.

“Ah!”

Isn’t that the name of the vampire who’s imprisoned in the basement by Father Utravsky?

...

In Duke Negan’s mansion, Audrey, who had been invited to a tea party, was listening to her mother and Duchess Della chatting about nobility matters with a slightly bored expression on her face.

Her eyes swept across the three-layered rack, the uniquely-styled muffins, cake, and other delicious tidbits. She felt that she had been indulging herself recently, so she lightly picked up her cup and sipped the black tea.

After a while, she got up apologetically and, accompanied by the maid, went to the bathroom.

As soon as she came out, she met a tall, middle-aged woman with slender eyebrows and a graceful appearance.

It was Duchess Della's younger sister, the wife of a hereditary viscount, Lady Norma.

After exchanging the formalities, Norma looked at Audrey and said with a chuckle, "I heard that our beautiful young lady is very interested in mysticism?"

She mentioned mysticism. Could it be that someone from the Psychology Alchemists is here to test me? Audrey instantly entered her state as a Telepathist. A little embarrassed, she lowered her head and replied, "Yes."

Author's Notes:

As for Abraham's diary, some people said it was rather unnatural and not written by me, but why did I choose this way of dealing with it? Instead of softer ones, such as the inherited formula hidden in the notebook inner layer.

This is based on the character, although the unlucky guy just died as a Beyonder, he also has his own character, he thinks he is the protagonist, believe that he can let the Abraham family reappear the glory. Therefore, see the Volume 2 Chapter 101, he wrote at the beginning of the diary:

"This will go into the annals of the rise of a cursed family!

"I want to remember every key point!"

It can be seen from here that his diary is not only a diary, but also a history of self-description. He hopes that future generations can see through this diary how glorious, correct and great ancestors made a way to overcome the curse and reproduce the glory of the family.

Therefore, his diary should really be closer to the type shown to others, so he will record the psychological course of each choice, lest future

generations cannot understand the glorious, correct and great ancestors' purpose of doing so.

This is the reason why I handled it that way. As for the formula, it is even more normal. In such an important matter, ordinary people are definitely afraid of forgetting and will not rely solely on memory. There must be a corresponding paper record. The difference is only where the record is. Do you need to look for another one? Based on the character above, and take a diary as a note.

Had to say that, I still have to sigh. This time I didn't write well enough.

For an author, if the meaning he wants to express cannot be read directly between the lines and requires additional explanation, it proves that he is not good enough.

Perhaps I should strengthen this feeling of self-describing history written for others at the beginning of the diary. For example, add a sentence that future generations, please keep this history in mind. In this way, the following should appear more logical.

Also, it's not a coincidence to buy a purified bullet. Klein asked for it before. See Chapter 89 of Volume 2 for details.

Well, the book review area and this chapter comment are okay to argue, but please don't attack in life.

In the end, I have another chapter, and of course, I will ask for a monthly ticket!

I'll try to have another three night shift next week, but then before the 25th, there will be something to rush about. It's estimated that I can only keep two.

Forget the above sentence and ask for a monthly pass!

After hearing Audrey's affirmation, Lady Norma laughed.

"What an honest child.

"I happen to know some experts in mysticism who are very knowledgeable. Would you like to chat with them?"

"Definitely. That's exactly what I want. Praise the Lady." Feigning surprise, Audrey drew a crimson moon on her chest.

With a smile on her face, Madam Norma nodded slightly and said, "How about we have our afternoon tea together tomorrow?" "No problem." Audrey's excited eyes held a little innocence.

After she bade Lady Norma farewell and headed for the living room, her smile gradually settled as her bearing turned composed and relaxed.

The detailed changes in her body language, the color of her emotions, and the changes in her Body of Heart and Mind that were reflected superficially, they all imply that she holds no ill intentions, but she was rather nervous... It seems like Lady Norma might really be a member of the Psychology Alchemists... Hmm, she had been observing my expression and actions, but she couldn't adjust or hide her emotions. Maybe she's like Susie, a Spectator, but unfortunately, she didn't know that the person in front of her is a Telepathist... Audrey thought, feeling both perturbed and proud. She couldn't help but let her feet gracefully walk in a straight line with one foot taking the place of the other.

...

In the house of Isengard Stanton situated in Hillston Borough.

Klein's lips quivered a few times, but in the end, he didn't ask Stuart who his employer was or what he looked like.

He decided not to get involved in matters involving Emlyn White as best as he could.

Although based on Emlyn's words, he was a law-abiding vampire, but that was only limited to his claims. There were still too many gaps

about his earlier life for Klein to be sure that he had not harmed the innocent.

As a result, he lacked the motivation to seek out Father Utravsky to save Emlyn. After all, Father Utravsky was a Dawn Paladin who was skilled in combat and had the aid of mystical items. Furthermore, he was an unweakened Dawn Paladin!

Besides, it would make it easy for him to expose his true identity to Father Utravsky and Emlyn White.

Let's hope that he can gain the approval of that powerful priest as soon as possible and finish the "sentence" to be let out on "parole"... In his heart, Klein tapped four times in a clockwise fashion for Emlyn White.

After the bounty was divided, the detectives took their leave, and Klein was given the best treatment—he was walked out the door by the great Detective Isengard.

Holding his pipe, Isengard coughed lightly and said, "There are still some suspicious points about the serial murder case that we haven't fully understood. There might be an even more ferocious guy hiding behind the killer's back. You must be careful not to spread the word that you played an important role in this case."

It seems like the official Beyonders also suspect that the gigantic Devil dog has an owner... Klein replied solemnly, "I know, I had my own guesses about this too.

"Mr. Stanton, you have to be careful as well. You were the one who gathered us, and you're a major partner of the police."

Isengard put the pipe into his mouth, then he took it out and said, "Sherlock, I guess I'll call you Sherlock. You can rest assured that, although I'm no longer young, I'm still an outstanding fighter, an excellent marksman with an instinctive vigilance."

Furthermore, you have a high probability of being a Beyonder not from the low Sequences. I just wonder which pathway you belong to... Klein thought for a moment and said, "Mr. Stanton, you don't seem to be a native from Backlund? Your accent is closer to that of Sivellaus."

"Yes, just like your Midseashire accent," Isengard admitted frankly.

The two detectives smiled at each other as an acknowledgment of the other's observational ability.

Klein returned to 15 Minsk Street before nightfall.

Well, I now have 1,224 pounds in notes, plus 5 gold coins, and a small amount of change. This is quite a considerable amount compared to how much I had when I first came to Backlund. However, Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredients will cost at least 1,500 a pop. Sometimes, because they're scarce and rare, the price might even increase severalfold. And Beyonders who can obtain such items usually aren't low in Sequence; they wouldn't misjudge its value and sell it at a low price. It's quite impossible to pick it up at bargain prices...

Although the lady with the Artisan behind her is very eager for the Black Emperor potion formulas, she has to consider the progress of her advancement. For her to only be at Sequence 9, it's quite impossible for her to spend a large amount of money to buy the formulas up to Sequence 6 in advance, unless she's filthy rich... Well, you can't always be so exploitative...

While in thought, Klein was in no hurry to prepare dinner. Instead, he went back to his bedroom, drew the curtains, and went above the gray fog.

He had an idea that he needed to verify.

Sitting in The Fool's seat, he stretched out his hand and picked up the unadorned brass Master Key.

Based on the notebook he read last night from an Abraham descendant, he guessed that the man had lost control on the spot because of his choice of advancing during the full moon.

Therefore, the curse-like ability of the Master Key, which can make people go lost, only to find themselves in bad spots, has a high probability of being contaminated by Mr. Door's illusory ravings, other than the resentment and indignation in the Beyonder characteristic.

"So what sort of changes will it undergo when the moon is full?" Klein mumbled.

Conjuring a pen and paper, he wrote the divination statement he had thought long in advance: “What it manifests during the full moon.”

Holding the piece of paper in one hand and the Master Key in the other, Klein leaned back in his chair, gave a self-deprecating laugh and said, *“I’m courting death again...*

“But there shouldn’t be too much danger this time. Mr. Door is far separated from the real world. He’s lost in the depths of the darkness. Furthermore, I have the gray fog to shield me.”

In this case, the danger from divination was no different from direct divination. The experienced Klein half closed his eyes, and his pupils turning dark as he constantly chanted, “What it manifests during the full moon.”

...

After seven times, Klein fell into a dream.

In that gray, detached, illusory world, he once again saw the basement where the Abraham descendant had died.

The flesh and blood here had long since dried up. The silver pocket watch inlaid with diamonds and the ancient-looking Master Key had yet to be stolen. They were still lying on the ground.

Suddenly, a sharp, hollow voice echoed in Klein’s ears.

It was like a thin needle stabbing into his head, extending inside, bit by bit, while it scraped as if it was going to completely peel off his scalp!

This extreme pain caused Klein to wake up and sit up straight.

He looked at the blue veins protruding on the back before they quickly restored to normal.

Hmm, it’s much more manageable than spying on the Eternal Blazing Sun or secretly listening to the True Creator’s angry roars... Klein went from pressing down his fingers to rapping them as he thought.

Of course, if this were the outside world, he believed that he absolutely wouldn’t have had such a reaction.

If Miss Magician had always been listening to such pleas, she would've long lost control... From the looks of it, due to the resulting curse, the Master Key makes the voice even clearer. That's not right. Father Utravsky has likely survived the night of the Blood Moon with the Master Key in hand. He clearly wasn't affected...

Perhaps he had stored the Master Key in his bedroom and stayed in the hall outside for confession. Hmm, as long as one makes contact with the Master Key, they will hear the pleas during the full moon?

Phew. Before becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder, I wouldn't dare listen to it in the real world... What I heard just now seemed to be "requesting assistance" in ancient Hermes... Klein carefully recalled and confirmed what he had heard.

With regards to this, the only thing he could do was twitch the corner of his mouth. He didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

This is really a death-styled plea in the true meaning of the phrase!

It's a pity. If only we could make those people from the Rose School of Thought hear Mr. Door's plea for help on the night of the full moon. With their already cold warped personalities, they would definitely explode one after the another.

After carefully considering if there was any way to achieve this goal, Klein returned to the real world, and according to his plan, he enjoyed dinner, changed his clothes, and left the house.

He made two transfers and arrived outside the Bravehearts Bar. He only circled it once without ordering any alcohol before leaving.

While doing so, he noticed that Kaspars was back again.

After walking a block, Klein specially got on a rental carriage and made the driver head to Cherwood Borough.

An illusory figure appeared in front of him just as the horse moved forward. It was Miss Sharron, wearing a long black regal dress.

"Are you done with your preparations?" Sharron asked coldly.

The soft black cap on her head was firmly pressed against her light blonde hair. Coupled with her pale face, her exquisite facial features gave her the beauty of a doll.

Klein answered frankly, “Not yet.

“I’m still waiting for an item.”

Sharron said with unperturbed blue eyes, “I’ve prepared a mystical item.”

That’s why you took the mission of being a three-day bodyguard for a thousand pounds? Back then, the item caught your eyes, but you lacked the money? Klein smiled in enlightenment.

“Don’t be anxious. The more prepared we are, the greater the chance of success.”

Furthermore, I can usually use a mystical item from the Sun domain to make up for my shortcomings... Klein added in his heart.

Seeing that Sharron had stopped talking, he said, “I came here today to get you guys to help me in an experiment.” “What is it?” Sharron asked simply.

Klein said with a serious and trustworthy expression, “According to Maric’s description, I think your curses are different. During the full moon, he has to endure the crazy desire for bloodlust which makes him unable to fight. As for you, you would enter a weakened state if you do not absorb the souls of humans. Is that right?”

Sharron listened quietly and nodded.

“Yes.”

“I don’t have any solution to your problem at the moment, but I think it’s still possible to suppress Maric’s problem temporarily. For example, taking appropriate medicine and letting him be in a state where he doesn’t have any emotions. That way, during that time, he won’t be in pain, and he will be able to participate in the battle.” Klein expressed his thoughts.

Sharon shook her head and said, “It doesn’t work.

“Such medicine is no longer effective against him.”

No longer? In other words, it had worked before? Klein thoughtfully asked, “Why?”

“He had injected too much in the past. Even if he changed types, it’ll only be effective for the first three to four times. We’re unable to find any new types...” Sharon said, suddenly turning silent, as though remembering something.

Hearing her words, Klein immediately smiled.

“I have a different kind of sedative here, from that Apothecary.”

Seeing that Sharron didn’t say that this sedative was ineffective, he clasped his hands and continued, “I’ll give you one and let Maric try it during the full moon. It’s going to be a full moon tomorrow night.

“If it’s effective, let him drink two or even three in one go before the battle.”

As for whether he would develop a resistance to the same medicine in the future, that’s not something that needs to be considered right now... Klein thought calmly.

Sharron took the sedative that was stored in a glass tube, looked at the liquid that looked pure, and lightly nodded.

"Alright."

As expected of someone who doesn't waste her breath... Klein smiled and said, "Miss Sharron, can you tell me the candidate locations for the battleground that you've decided on? I wish to familiarize myself with the surroundings in the next few days. This way, no matter where you ultimately choose, my preparations would be more than sufficient."

And since they have the right to choose the location of the final battle, they won't worry about the possibility of me informing the authorities or any other Beyonder who might try to take advantage of the situation... Of course, if she really doesn't trust me, she could try another "notarization"... Klein thought quietly.

Sharron stared at him for a few seconds with her blue eyes before saying, "Prepare a map of Backlund when you're back.

"Leave it on the coffee table."

"No problem. I hope that this cooperation will not only go smoothly but also be enjoyable." Klein habitually leaned forward to shake hands.

Sharron lowered her head to take a look, and her figure gradually faded into the air.

Klein continued his motion and raised his right hand to smooth his black hair, laughing dryly in the process.

He had asked for the location of the battleground ahead of time, not only to prepare for the mission but also to be on guard against Sharron and Maric.

Although their philosophy was to suppress and restrain their desires, and it was unlikely they wouldn't kick someone to the curb when they'd outlived their usefulness. Klein couldn't be sure that Wraith Steve, Zombie Jason, and Werewolf Tyre didn't have what they had abnormally desired. If there really was a treasure that would cause any

ordinary Beyonder to have strong malicious intent, Klein really couldn't guarantee that the two Mutants would be able to control themselves.

Therefore, he had to figure out the environment in advance and prepare an escape route in the event that they wished to silence him.

It wasn't that Klein didn't trust Sharron, who he had went through life-and-death with, but it was the most basic form of self-protection.

One shouldn't have the heart to harm others, but one must be vigilant so as to not be harmed... Klein turned his head to look out the window and sighed inwardly as he mused a Chinese phrase.

One gas lamp after another kept being left behind as the carriage went forward. The streets became more spacious and cleaner, and it took him more than half an hour to get back to Minsk Street.

It's really expensive taking a carriage at this time... Klein looked up at the nearly black sky and the red moon that seemed to barely pierce through the clouds.

He walked on for a while, and suddenly he saw that the house of Lawyer Jurgen was dark.

Pulling out his gold pocket watch, he pressed it open and glanced at it. With a chuckle, Klein detoured to Jurgen's door and used the key that he had been given to open it.

At that moment, Brody the black cat was already quietly sitting behind the door, staring at the visitor with his pair of dark, round green eyes. The room was dark and silent, bleak and lonely.

Klein squatted down and tried to touch Brody's head, but Brody quickly moved back and flung his hand away in disgust.

Shaking his head with laughter, he got up, opened the valve, and lit the gas lamp. Following Jurgen's descriptions, he went to the cupboard to find the food that had already been prepared.

Then, he went into the kitchen, lit the kettle to boil some water, and prepared Brody's favorite dish, boiled chicken breast.

The black cat followed him in, and with an agile leap, it reached the counter. It sat beside him and watched him without making a fuss.

Klein glanced at it, rehearsing the shredding of chicken breast in his mind while he chatted with Brody, “You must miss Mrs. Doris, right?

“Are you worried about her condition...

“Lawyer Jurgen didn’t come home today. Are you feeling lonely and uncomfortable on your own? Do you feel like you lack a sense of belonging and are exhausted...”

...

As he spoke, Klein’s voice slowly faded into silence.

Brody the black cat remained sitting there, quietly watching him. It didn’t make any noise, nor did it cry out.

...

Audrey was invited to tea at Lady Norma’s house.

“These are the mysticism experts that I mentioned.” Lady Norma introduced the distinguished guests warmly, “This is Mr. Hilbert Alucard, a psychologist and a jewelry designer. He’s very talented. This is Miss Escalante Oseleka. She’s a doctor for mental health, what we usually call a psychiatrist.”

Hilbert Alucard was a man in his forties. He looked to be of Southern Continent descent, and his skin was brown.

His brown hair, blue eyes, and facials features weren’t particularly outstanding. He gave off a silent and reserved feeling.

Escalante Oseleka was a baby-faced lady who looked like a young girl studying at a public or grammar school even though she was already a psychiatrist.

She was three or four centimeters shorter than Audrey, and she had long raven-black hair that reached her waist and a pair of lake-blue eyes.

Audrey exchanged a few pleasantries with him, then she sat down, keenly aware that Alucard and Escalante were observing her.

She didn't use her Telepathist abilities, and she pretended to know nothing. While initiating topics in the field of mysticism, she constantly paid attention to her emotions, ensuring that they were in the most logical state.

I can't let them find out that I'm already a Beyonder, and that I have already taken the Spectator and Telepathist potions... Audrey knew exactly what role she was to play today.

Unlike the silent Alucard, Escalante was quite a conversationalist. After a few rounds of exchanges, she asked, "Do you know about Major Years and Major Months?"

"No, I haven't heard of those," Audrey cautiously answered, using only the knowledge she had obtained from her interaction with mysticism enthusiasts.

In fact, I've already learned from Mr. Hanged Man what a Major Year and Major Month is... she added with a smile in her heart.

"A Major Year refers to the number of years it takes for the planet to deviate from its axis, totaling 25,920 years. In the field of mysticism, this is considered a complete cycle that goes from the beginning to the end. A Major Month refers to the number of years it takes for this deviation to pass through one of the twelve constellations. Each Major Month represents 2,160 years. During the transition of Major Months, terrible disasters will occur. And according to calculations, we aren't too many years away from the end of the current Major Moon..." Escalante spoke with confidence, keeping the atmosphere harmonious.

Audrey hid the fact that she knew a lot as she asked the wrong questions from time to time in a curious tone.

With this, time passed quickly. At the end of tea time, Alucard and Escalante stood up at the same time to take their leave, leaving Lady Norma's house.

This caused Audrey to be rather disappointed. She imagined that they would eventually hint at the matter regarding the Psychology Alchemists, but in the end, they didn't say anything.

Yes, as a secret organization that cannot be exposed, the examination of candidates can't be that simple and direct... From the looks of it, they will need to interact with me a few times and observe me in secret before they decide whether or not they want to reveal information to me and recruit me into the organization... That's good too, I can report this to Mr. Fool! Audrey quickly understood the underlying reasons.

She then took her leave, and Lady Norma walked her to the door, smiled, and said, "Audrey, I see that you're also interested in psychology? Why not consider being a psychiatrist before you get married?

"Earl Hall and his wife are followers of the Goddess. They should be able to support you in doing such things."

Among aristocrats, unless there was a financial crisis or other special situations, coming to an agreement on marriage required a long process. Only after careful consideration and comparisons would they be able to make a decision. This was because this wasn't only a matter between two youngsters, but it also involved the alliance and mutual assistance of the two families.

Therefore, although aristocratic women were able to officially enter social events under the direction of the queen after the age of 18, proclaiming their adulthood and consideration for marriage, they often started a family after the age of 26 according to statistics.

Similarly, the average age of a male aristocrat's entry into politics for the first time was 28.5 years.

In other words, Audrey would have about eight years to do what she liked after she reached adulthood.

The Church of Evernight had always encouraged female believers to go out to work and engage in certain occupations. In the aristocratic circles, many young ladies and women became literary critics, musicians, pianists, painters, etc.

Is this a test? Audrey smiled faintly and replied, "I will need to read more books in that case."

Actually, she had always felt that it wasn't too safe for the members of the Psychology Alchemists to become psychologists or psychiatrists because the upper echelons of the official organizations, such as the Nighthawks and the Mandated Punishers, likely knew of the acting method. Therefore, they would definitely pay more attention to this group of people.

Lady Norma seemed pleased with her answer and nodded with a smile.

"Escalante and Alucard are both good teachers."

"Well, maybe I could consider asking Miss Escalante to be my home tutor on psychology." Audrey nodded obediently.

...

When Klein got up on the early Sunday morning, he found that the map of Backlund on the coffee table in the living room had been circled in several places, and they weren't too far apart. Therefore, he spent the rest of the morning carefully familiarizing himself with the surroundings, figuring out exactly where the buildings were located, and where the nearest cathedral was.

In the afternoon, having time to spare again, he went to the Quelaag Club to practice his shooting and Beyonder powers.

As soon as he entered the hall, he saw the surgeon, Aaron Ceres, hobbling out slowly from the buffet cafeteria with a crutch.

After greeting him, he asked out of concern, "How have you been lately, Aaron? Has your luck improved?"

Aaron, who was born with a blank face, smiled sincerely.

"At least I'm not that unlucky anymore.

"I followed your suggestion, went to the cathedral, and told the bishop about the matter. He told me to go directly to the confessional to pray to the Goddess.

"I actually fell asleep while praying, but I felt like the Goddess had bestowed me with a peaceful state. After that, my luck has been normal!

“Praise the Lady!”

He drew a crimson moon on his chest.

According to my experience, it was likely a particular Sequence 7 Nightmare who caused you to fall into a deep sleep. Then, a Nighthawk, who specializes in rituals, quickly set up an altar, prayed to the Goddess, and neutralized your misfortune... Klein smiled.

“That’s great!”

At that moment, Aaron looked at him and said, “Sherlock, I’ve always felt that you weren’t very pious in your belief of the God of Steam and Machinery. Why don’t you change your faith? Look at me, a perfect example. Put your faith in the Goddess!”

A-aren't you making things difficult for me? Upon hearing Aaron's request, Klein almost drew the crimson moon on his chest, but he ultimately resisted the urge and replied very seriously, "Perhaps there's something about my behavior that has led you to misunderstand.

"But I have to tell you that faith is something that cannot be changed after it's decided upon."

Aaron immediately raised his arms and made an apologetic gesture.

"I'm sorry that I misunderstood your faithfulness. I shouldn't have taken your faith as a joke.

"Alright, our differences in faith do not prevent us from becoming friends."

Klein wiped away the fake expression he put on and smiled.

"That's not true in Feysac and Feynapotter. They can only accept one faith."

In comparison, with so many Churches coexisting for more than fourteen hundred years, Loen and Intis are much more open in this respect.

Before Aaron could answer, he casually changed the subject.

"Did you see Will Auceptin again? I'm referring to the kid that had one of his legs amputated, the one who said that your luck would turn for the worse."

He was certain that the Nighthawks would follow the clues provided by Aaron, so he wondered what the outcome was. He was curious if the child who changed Aaron's luck still had the tarot card in his possession.

"No, I haven't seen him since he left the hospital." Aaron shook his head firmly.

What a pity. The Nighthawks can find his address according to the hospital's records, and it's not convenient for me to be involved... Of course, the child might've moved away long ago. After a brief

exchange with Aaron, Klein decided to head for the underground shooting range, familiarizing himself with his free revolver with ordinary bullets.

At this moment, two more acquaintances came in. One was a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, Coim Company shareholder, Ma'am Mary, and the other was Klein's landlord, Stelyn Sammer. They were all wearing relatively light skirts, making them look much younger.

According to the rules of the club, each member could only bring in one additional person; therefore, Mary's maid and her bodyguard were left in the reception hall.

Klein politely greeted them and praised them out of courtesy, "Ladies, you two are as beautiful as ever today, and yet there is a beauty that's different from your usual beauty."

Having come into contact with a lot of important figures recently, Mary smiled and said, "Roselle said that exercise is a necessity of life, and Stelyn is always at home, dealing with trivial matters. Even when she's out, she would be participating in parties and listening to operas. Her health is much worse than it used to be, so I brought her here to play tennis and squash."

With her high cheekbones, she looked around and saw a member of the House of Commons and two other Members of Parliament of the greater Backlund area. She then turned to Stelyn and said, "I see someone I know. Excuse me while I head over to greet them. You can wait for me at the library."

"Alright." Compared to Mary, Stelyn was clearly much prettier, but towards this lady, she seemed very respectful and docile.

After Mary had gone some distance away, she slightly raised her chin, looked at Klein and asked, "Mr. Moriarty, you seem very busy these days?"

"Yes, I was working with a lot of detectives to help the police investigate the serial murder case. We made a certain contribution and received quite a sizable reward," Klein answered truthfully.

Stelyn covered her mouth with her hand.

“Really?

“What did the murderer look like? Why did he kill those ladies? The newspapers had been very vague.”

“I’m sorry, I have to comply with the confidentiality clause.” Klein deftly made up an excuse.

It’s not like I can tell you that it had a body of black fur; a smooth, glistening tail; and that it likes to run on all fours... Klein lampooned inwardly.

Stelyn nodded regretfully, and then she asked curiously, “So how much did you get?”

“It was split among quite a number of us.” Klein didn’t answer directly.

“Was there fifty pounds?” Stelyn pressed.

“Yes.” Klein nodded *“honestly.”* Stelyn
Sammer smiled.

“You earn a lot more than I imagined. You really are a capable detective.”

“No, it might take years to come across such a case.” Klein smiled and shook his head.

“No matter what, you have proven your ability.” Stelyn’s eyes looked like they were thinking as she said, “Next Sunday, Luke and I will be hosting a party at home. I hope you can come, um, sorry. I was very presumptuous. I’ll have my maid send the invitation to you. Heh heh, there will be a lot of unmarried ladies at the party, and their fathers or mothers will have decent jobs, and their families will earn more than 200 pounds a year. Some of them have part-time jobs that they can do at home, such as being a typist. They’re all very excellent women.”

Th-this is a blind date party... Mrs. Stelyn has approved of my ability to make money as a detective, so she plans on introducing me to a girl? But in her eyes, am I only fit to be with a woman at that level? Many thoughts flashed through Klein’s mind, but after considering the need

to maintain their neighborly friendliness and the trouble of preparing his own dinner, he agreed with a smile.

“If all goes well, I’ll be there on time.”

Stelyn smiled and said, “Then Luke and I will be awaiting your

visit.”

She left without another word and entered the small library of the club, while Klein proceeded to practice his shooting and Beyonder powers in the small, enclosed shooting range.

...

At 9 o’clock at night, Klein was sitting at his desk, watching as the crimson moon gradually pierced through the clouds, revealing a full body.

The water-like, light red “veil” slowly spread out, and time passed by the minute. When it was quarter past ten, he heard illusory pleas that seemed layered.

Klein easily guessed that it was from Miss Magician.

Closing the curtains, he switched off the lights, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray mist. There, he reached out to touch the shrinking and expanding crimson star.

In a split-second, the hazy figure of Fors appeared on the chair with the symbol of a layered door.

She let out a sigh of relief, stood up, and bowed.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, you have saved me once again.”

“That’s not something to worry about,” Klein replied in a very light, casual tone.

Fors was left speechless and sat down again.

She was considering what had just happened, so she didn’t say anything. As for Klein, he didn’t take the initiative to bring up any subjects in order to maintain his image.

Within the towering palace which looked like a giant's residence, the silence quickly transformed into the main theme.

When Fors snapped back to her senses, she suddenly felt that this atmosphere was a little oppressive and uncomfortable.

During the gathering, there's still Miss Justice, Mr. World, and company. There was no need to worry about complete silence, but now, there's only Mr. Fool and me. What should I do? This pressure is stifling! I need to say something, I have to. I can't just sit here like an idiot... That's Mr. Fool! He certainly wouldn't care about anything, but I'm so nervous and restricted! Fors suddenly felt as though she had found herself alone with her boss when she first entered the workforce.

Although Klein wasn't a Spectator, he could clearly see Miss Magician's restraint and uneasiness. He smiled and said, "Maybe you can tell me how you became a Beyonder."

For example, how you obtained the Apprentice formula and that bracelet... Klein silently added the real question he was trying to get by.

Fors relaxed a little and recalled.

"That was almost three years ago. I just graduated from Backlund Medical School.

"With my father's help, I entered a private clinic with pretty good benefits. Heh, my father had already settled down in East Balam back then.

"Ever since the safe sea route to the Southern Continent was discovered, the outstanding youth of the kingdom started spreading their footprints to every corner of the land. My father, as a low-level military officer, went to East Balam to chase after wealth and power. My mother and I were left behind in Backlund to live like widows. Heh heh, it would take months before a distant letter sent by boat would arrive.

"This situation isn't uncommon in the kingdom. I knew an old gentleman who had five children, but they were either in the archipelago, Western Balam, the Paz Valley, or the Haagenti Plains.

They have their own career, their own family, and their own wealth, but they've forgotten that there is a father waiting for their return all this time.

"When I was in grammar school, my mother fell seriously ill. I had no choice but to helplessly watch her die on the hospital bed, and it took my father a month to answer my letter, telling me that he had a new family and a new life in East Balam. He gave me all his property in Backlund plus some money. I think

he felt a little guilty."

As a best-selling novel writer, Fors had mastered the art of rambling.

Since Klein had nothing to do, he listened quietly without interrupting.

Phew. Fors exhaled and continued, "Anyway, my father introduced me to Yosifov Clinic through the veterans' club. The salary there was really good, and I was doing pretty well, but I was a little anxious about the future. Hence, I worked hard to learn from the senior doctors and worked hard to save money until I met an old lady who came to see me regularly.

"She was very lonely and childless, and her partner had passed away ten years ago. I had some sympathy for her, so I often talked to her and accompanied her.

"Once, I was surprised to find that she was able to walk through walls, which opened a whole new world to me.

"That old lady said that it was something her husband left her. She vaguely mentioned that as long as one wasn't a member of some family, there was apparently no curse.

"Not long after, she was so ill that she was on the verge of passing away. She asked me if I wanted to become someone like her. I was very young then, and I still had a lot of fantasies in my head. I agreed without any hesitation.

"She gave me the formula and told me to watch her body after she died and take away the glowing object that would suddenly appear. And this was the thing she left me which could be used as the main ingredient of a potion.

“Also, she gave me this bracelet, telling me not to use it unless I’m in absolute danger. She also told me not to pay too much attention to the ravings during the full moon.

“Unfortunately, I was ultimately unable to avoid danger. After using it once, the full moon’s raving became worse.”

It seems like that was a widow of a particular Abraham... She had used her own experience to prove that the “curse” only existed in the bloodline... Klein nodded.

“Once you become a High-Sequence Beyonder, the ravings wouldn’t have much of an effect on you.”

“I hope so.” Although she didn’t believe she could become a HighSequence Beyonder, she believed in Mr. Fool.

...

It was Monday again, and as soon as Klein got up, he went downstairs and saw an open sheet of paper on the coffee table in the living room.

“Effective.”

That’s good... Klein immediately let out a sigh of relief.

At fifteen minutes to three in the afternoon, he promptly went above the gray fog to “prepare” for the new Tarot Club gathering.

Chapter 341: Private Communication

The sight of the towering stone pillars that supported a high dome and the mottled and ancient long table that appeared to have been placed there since hundreds, if not more than a thousand years ago entered the eyes... Although Audrey Hall had seen this scene many times, she would still feel a kind of shock that came from the bottom of her heart the moment she arrived above the gray fog.

Out of the corner of her eye, she scanned the surroundings and didn't see any new members. She then looked up and bowed to the person in the thick gray fog.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

As she spoke, she suddenly saw a card covered with a complicated pattern on the table to the right of The Fool.

It was lying there quietly, casually, like an ordinary object.

I-is that the Card of Blasphemy? A Card of Blasphemy that hides one of the paths of the divine! Audrey immediately understood. After The Fool nodded in response, she subconsciously glanced at The Hanged Man, The Sun, and The Magician, and she found that they had also noticed the card that didn't exist in the past.

However, their eyes and actions revealed their doubts and astonishment, as well as their inevitable conjectures. After all, a card that could be placed by the mysterious and lofty Mr. Fool was definitely not an ordinary item... Well, Mr. World's reaction is a little odd. He's not even looking there. Is he able to hide his thoughts so well? Is he really the nemesis of a Spectator and Telepathist? Audrey quickly decided that, other than Mr. Fool, the Card of Blasphemy was known only to herself.

This made her feel quite proud. It was a feeling like sharing a secret with her parents when she was young while she kept her two elder brothers in the dark.

That's a Card of Blasphemy created by Emperor Roselle, a treasure that countless Beyonders in the mysterious world dream of! Audrey

took the initiative to raise her hand after The Magician, The Sun, and the others did their greetings.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, I have something I would like to report to you alone.”

Alone? Alger frowned slightly as he subconsciously tried to guess at the content but was without any clue.

Derrick and the others were also curious, but they didn’t think too much about it.

Klein nodded slightly and said, “Sure.”

Frankly, he had no idea what Miss Justice was going to report to him.

After waiting two seconds, he blocked off the senses of the rest of the members and gestured to Justice.

Audrey sat with a dignified posture and said with a sincere attitude, “Mr. Fool, as I had asked to purchase the Spectator formula at a Beyonder gathering, there has been two suspected members of the Psychology Alchemists who came into contact with me recently through certain nobles.

“I’m inclined to join them, but only if I can guarantee my own safety.

“What is your opinion on this? I’ve attached great importance to this.”

Psychology Alchemists... From the evidence from various sources of information, it’s not considered an evil organization. At present, they might not have a deity that they believe in. Its main mission is to explore and research one’s mind, consciousness, psyche, and spirituality. It’s more like a scientific self-help group. Of course, among the Orthodox Churches, it’s also a form of sacrilege since they believe that everyone’s spirit belongs to god. And according to Daxter Guderian, the upper echelons of the Psychology Alchemists definitely have an inclination—the original Creator, the god that created everything, and they worship “Him” to a certain extent, a rather primitive form of worship... Many thoughts flashed past Klein’s mind as he finally said with a smile, “If you think it’s suitable, you can do so.

"If you encounter a problem, you can seek help from the Tarot Club."

"Thank you for your suggestion." Audrey instantly felt relieved.

Klein thought for a moment and added using a calm and leisurely tone, "Inside the Psychology Alchemists, there are people planted by the Churches, such as informants of the Mandated Punishers and Nighthawks. You have to know how to hide and conceal yourself."

Mr. Fool is so nice to remind me to be careful... Audrey slightly bent her eyes and replied with a shallow smile, "In the future, there will also be an informant from the Tarot Club inside the Psychology Alchemists."

...Miss Justice, you haven't even joined, and you're already thinking of betraying them... Klein silently drew an invisible crimson moon for the Psychology Alchemists.

After reporting the matter of the Psychology Alchemists, Audrey wasn't in a hurry to end the conversation. Instead, she said, "Mr. Fool, I've memorized another two pages of Roselle's diary."

That was also why she had asked to speak to him in private. If she had conjured Roselle's diary and given it to Mr. Fool under the witness of The Magician, Fors, she could imagine that at the end of the gathering, Fors would immediately come to her and borrow those Roselle's notes she had bought in the past. And with regards to this, the Goddess could prove that Mr. Fool had seen them all!

I forgot to do so previously. One of these two days, I'll find an opportunity to tell Fors that the Roselle notes I bought were torn apart by Susie. Yes, torn apart, into pieces that cannot be restored! I'm sorry, Susie... Audrey repented in her heart.

"Very good." Klein knocked gratefully on the edge of the long bronze table to help Miss Justice conjure the diary pages.

When he had the two pages in hand, he cast his eyes over, only to have his smile gradually stiffen.

The first line of the journal read: "6th March. Dammit, I'm almost constipated from eating the food here!"

...

This is what I saw at the Roselle Memorial Exhibition... Klein hid his expression and turned to the second page. He found that the contents were still the complaints and novel experiences of Roselle's early days of his transmigration. They were of no practical use.

He controlled his expression and smiled.

"Do you wish to deduct from the gold pounds you have yet to pay, or do you wish to get something else in return?"

Audrey said without any hesitation, "Mr. Fool, I would like to know which path of the divine that Card of Blasphemy is."

You really treat money as dirt... Klein silently sighed, as he didn't hide his smile as he said, "That is the Black Emperor card.

"The corresponding Sequence 9 is Lawyer."

So that's what it is... After receiving her answer, Audrey felt abnormally satisfied.

After the private conversation ended, The Magician, Fors, looked eagerly at The World who sat right at the other end.

"Mr. World, I will try my best to gather a mystical item or powerful Beyonder weapon in the Sun domain."

"What kind of deal did you two make in private?" Despite feeling very familiar with Fors, Audrey wasn't aware of this, so she couldn't help but ask.

Fors let out a sigh and said, "Mr. World has helped me find the formula to Trickmaster."

Mr. World sure is capable at finding formulas... Does he have extensive and reliable resources and connections in this field? Audrey listened in surprise.

The Hanged Man, Alger, concealed his solemn expression, once again reevaluating The World and raising his assessment of him.

As for Derrick, he felt rather expectant. He hoped that after he finished digesting the Light Suppliant potion, Mr. World would be able to easily find for him the formula for Sequence 7, Solar High Priest.

The World laughed hoarsely when faced with the numerous gazes that were staring at him.

“Miss Magician, before you purchase it, it’s best that you chant Mr. Fool’s honorific name and request that ‘He’ pass the relevant information to me. Yes, I have already sought Mr. Fool’s permission and ‘He’ has agreed to help us.

“If I’m not satisfied with the items that you have set your eyes on, perhaps I will consider switching to another request.”

Klein now had three alternatives for the items in the Sun domain, so he planned to compare them before making any finalization.

One of them was the brooch which Old Mister Eye of Wisdom had mentioned. It had the effect of purifying and warding off evil spirits and letting the wearer use a portion of the spells in the Sun domain. The negative effect was that the wearer would never feel cool, forever stuck in a hot and irritable state.

Klein found the mystical item only okay, and since the price could be close to 2,000 pounds, he was unable to afford it, even if he had sold the Briber formula; therefore, he planned to wait a few days. If Miss Magician and the lady with the Artisan backing her couldn’t find something better, then he would cash out the formula and buy the brooch.

“Okay, I’ll give you the information no later than tomorrow.” Fors had confirmed that Mr. A would be hosting a gathering that very night, but she had given herself another day for any unexpected outcomes.

When the conversation was over, Alger looked around and said, as if he had already prepared a draft, “I recently took on an investigative mission. I’m not sure if you have any relevant leads.

“In the past two to three years, many original native tribes in the Southern Continent have been plundered and all their people were

taken away. In the various colonies, on the islands at sea, some slaves have also mysteriously escaped.

"Such situations have not happened in a long time since the countries of the Northern Continent abolished the slave trade. Have you all heard anything that's relevant?"

His eyes swept over Justice, The Magician, and The World, but he didn't look at The Sun.

How could a boy trapped in the City of Silver inside the Forsaken Land of God know about what was happening outside?!

Audrey carefully recalled the conversations she had heard at the many noble gatherings, but after a while, she said, "No, I've never even heard of such a thing."

The Magician and The World shook their heads.

Is this indicating that slave trading in the black market is flourishing again? Why would they need so many slaves? Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table and thought about the matter suspiciously.

Seeing that no one could provide any clues, and how Mr. Fool showed no interest whatsoever by not interrupting, he said without changing his expression, "You can attempt to seek out the formula for Wind-blessed.

"I will provide you with payment that would absolutely be enough to satisfy you."

The formula for the Wind-blessed? He's almost done digesting the potion of the Seafarer... Klein activated his Spirit Vision and glanced at The Hanged Man. Sure enough, he found that the surface layer of his Astral Projection was not only pure blue like the sea, but it also had slight ripples, as if slowly undulating.

...If I do the math, it took Mr. Hanged Man nearly four months to digest the Seafarer potion. He's often at sea... Audrey also made a judgment based on what she had observed.

Another point that Fors paid more attention to was that Mr.

Hanged Man was likely a Sequence 7!

A Mid-Sequence Beyonder... she nodded indiscernibly and said to herself.

After The Hanged Man finished announcing his mission, Derrick raised his hand and said with some apprehension, “I’ve been assigned to go on a mission. I will be heading to the halfdestroyed temple, that I mentioned previously, in the near future, yes, the one related to the Fallen Creator.

“The leader responsible for this operation is Shepherd Elder Lovia.

“Do you have any suggestions?”

Suggestions? My advice is to stay as far away as possible... Upon hearing The Sun's question, Klein instantly had such an answer in his mind.

However, in order to preserve the image of The Fool and see what the others would suggest, he remained silent and did not manipulate The World to speak.

After a short moment of silence, Alger turned his head to look at The Sun. He said in a staid and gentle voice, "You have provided too little information, so it's difficult for us to give any useful advice.

"The only thing we know of regarding that semi-destroyed temple is the presence of the True Creator, or in other words, the Fallen Creator's unique statue. We don't know what else is there, so naturally, we aren't able to make much of an analysis of the situation."

The Fallen Creator is indeed the True Creator... To think that there's faith in the True Creator in the City of Silver where The Sun lives. There's even a temple built... The Magician Fors listened with relish and almost wanted to write it down. Justice Audrey waited for The Sun's description of the strange temple in anticipation.

Derrick nodded, his eyes looking up for a few seconds before he said, "In addition to the statue, there are also many incomplete murals with terrifying evil spirits lingering around. However, they have already been eliminated by the exploratory team led by two elders from the six-member council...

"I've yet to see those murals with my own eyes. It's said that it records the prophecy of the end of days and how the Fallen Creator will save his believers, as well as the corresponding bloody ritual...

"In the corner of a certain mural, there are some strange characters that appear to be evolved from Jotun. After some deciphering, a few elders believe that they meant: Rose Redemption.

"This might a code name for the original muralist. It might also be the code name of the organization that built the temple and the city.

"According to the Chief's judgment, these murals are at least a thousand years old.

"The thousand years I'm referring to is the one that you know, uh, but I'm not completely sure. In the City of Silver, w-we use the frequency of lightning to demarcate our days. It's considered night when the lightning eases up and day when there's plenty of lightning. One cycle is a day, and the four seasons only exist in books, so we can't grasp the specific number of days. Only the Chief can confirm that."

At this point in The Sun's story, Fors suspected that she was listening to a fairytale.

A city without the sun, without the red moon, without day and night or changes in the seasons, it sounded unreal no matter how she listened to it! Only fairytales or novels would make such daring descriptions!

And the author has to smoke cannabis and be in a state of psychotic madness in order to create such a city... The first thought that came to her mind after her astonishment was, *I want to use the City of Silver as a blueprint for a novel!*

However, she soon gave up on this idea, for she didn't know what the City of Silver really implied. She wasn't sure if it was a secret that was collectively concealed by the Seven Churches, and she was afraid that as soon as the book was published, she, as the author, would have the Nighthawks knocking on her door, claiming to collect the copper pennies in her gas meter.

So that's the kind of environment which the City of Silver has. Hmm, The Sun also often mentions of monsters lurking deep in the darkness... Unfortunately, I'm only at Sequence 8. Otherwise, I would really like to ask Mr. Fool to send me there for an adventure. No, Audrey, you are no longer an innocent girl. You should be aware of how much danger is involved in this matter... Justice Audrey switched between letting her thoughts run wild while also engaging in self-reflection.

At least a thousand years? The Aurora Order hasn't been in existence for more than three centuries. It might not even be two centuries old. It's unlikely to be built by them... Hmm, perhaps the True Creator's faith had begun as early as the Fifth Epoch or even the Fourth Epoch.

However, the organization that revered "Him" wasn't the Aurora Order... In the next one to two thousand years, the seven Orthodox Churches have been repressing it, causing the True Creator's believers to be in a crisis. The Churches have destroyed them again and again, and finally, they had resurrected themselves as the Aurora Order? Klein, who had some guesses, made his seating posture and state appear unchanged.

Derrick paused for two seconds and continued, "A preliminary clean up of the terrifying monsters in the city ruins and the halfdestroyed temple has been done. Our mission this time is to explore the underground parts of the temple.

"Do you have any suggestions? With your understanding of the Fallen Creator, what should I pay attention to?"

"My suggestion?" Alger said without almost any hesitation, "My advice is absolutely not to go!

"The Fallen Creator is a true evil god. Even if 'His' temple has been destroyed, it might still contain abnormal danger which cannot be easily detected. If the one leading your team is one of the other elders of the six-member council, then there's nothing wrong if you insist on going. It will just be risky. But you just mentioned that the person in charge of this matter is Shepherd Lovia, and the True Creator is the deity standing at the peak of this Beyonder pathway! Therefore, absolutely do not go," Alger added.

Your suggestion is the same as mine, but it doesn't require The Sun to describe the half-destroyed temple. You could've come up with this conclusion with the conditions at the beginning... I understand. Mr. Hanged Man, you were doing it on purpose. This way, you got a rough idea of the state of the temple without paying anything... You're really just bullying a little kid... Sitting at the end of the table, Klein leisurely reached out his hand to support his forehead.

The Sun was silent for a few seconds, and seemingly having been put in a tough spot, he said, "But the mission is compulsory."

The Hanged Man chuckled and said, "Nothing is necessary.

"Will you still be participating in patrols before this mission? Find an opportunity and deliberately let the monsters injure you. As for how serious it should be, you can reference the past cases in the City of Silver."

At this moment, Audrey read a message from Sun's eyes and movements.

"That actually works?"

After a brief period of surprise and confusion, Derrick frowned and said, "But I don't have any patrolling missions in the near future..."

Alger sneered.

"You can always pretend to be on the brink of losing control. No, to be precise, you can push yourself to the brink of losing control. Under such a situation, I believe the higher-ups of the City of Silver would definitely not bring 'dangerous baggage' with them on the exploratory mission, right?

"There is a trick; as long as you keep your spirituality in an empty state for two days, you will begin to hear auditory hallucinations and show signs of losing control. If you stop suppressing yourself, then your situation will improve in a week, and you wouldn't really lose control.

"Of course, your City of Silver definitely has some solutions and contingencies to cure those who show signs of losing control. Your recovery would definitely be quick, so you need to time yourself perfectly. It's best if you start doing so two to three days before you set off."

Derrick was stunned for quite a while before he muttered to himself, "Yes, those who show signs of losing control will be placed under control and be quarantined underground in the spire, where they will be treated with medicine, rituals, and mystical items. If the situation isn't too serious, then they only need to consume medicine..."

Sigh, an honest and good kid has been corrupted by an old fox just like that... But, Mr. Hanged Man, how do you know of this trick of pushing yourself to the brink of losing control? If you use this trick often, losing control might really happen... Klein sighed in his heart.

Audrey was dumbstruck when she heard this. She felt as though she'd been educated.

Seeing that The Sun was still hesitating as though he didn't wish to lie to the City of Silver's elders, Alger slowly asked, "Do the other elders of the six-member council know that the Fallen Creator controls the Shepherd pathway?"

"They don't." Derrick shook his head honestly.

Alger asked again, "Do you think it's possible that Shepherd Elder Lovia will do harm to the City of Silver? Just answer yes or no; there's no need for any explanations."

"...Yes." Derrick finally couldn't lie to himself.

Alger chuckled and said, "So, you are the only one who knows of this matter, but you haven't found a way to warn the other elders of the six-member council, right?" "Yes." Derrick's expression grew heavier.

Alger changed his seating posture as he leaned back.

"This mission carries immense risk. This is something you know. If you die in that half-destroyed temple, then who will be able to find a way to expose the strangeness of Shepherd Lovia? Who can save the City of Silver from this crisis? The Fallen Creator is a real evil god!"

"You are not pretending to lose control or lying to others for your own personal interests. You are doing so to save the City of Silver!

"Comparing your honor to that, which is more important?" Derrick clenched his teeth and nodded solemnly.

"I understand.

"Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man."

Audrey and Fors suddenly had the urge to facepalm themselves.

He really is an easily fooled child... However, that's good too; it prevents the Tarot Club from losing members in the near future... Klein sighed silently as he controlled The World to say, "I have a question to ask Mr. Sun.

"This could involve a transaction.

“Therefore, I’m requesting a private exchange.”

Klein quickly switched back to himself and nodded indifferently. “Sure.”

After the others were screened, The World looked at The Sun and asked, “Does the City of Silver have a way to remove an evil god’s mental corruption on a Beyonder characteristic?”

This was something Klein had wanted to ask a few times before, but considering that Justice and the others might also be interested, and if The Sun was unable to answer questions that involved an evil god, then all eyes would likely be cast toward the godlike Mr. Fool; therefore, he had restrained his impulse. It was only moments ago when he got inspiration from Miss Justice and came up with the idea of communicating privately.

“We have never encountered an evil god.” Derrick answered earnestly, “We can only separate a Rampager’s mental corruption from a Beyonder characteristic.”

That’s it! This might actually work; after all, I have the gray fog... Klein suppressed his joy and made The World speak, “What do you need in return?”

“It’s not a matter of compensation.” Sun shook his head. “That method and the corresponding knowledge requires me to be at least the Captain of a patrol team, or even a strong warrior like the Captain of an exploratory team in order to be privy to such matters. The former requires being Sequence 7, while the latter requires a minimum of Sequence 6.”

Phew... Klein sighed, letting The World hoarsely say, “I hope that you can attain the qualifications as soon as possible.”

Chapter 343: By Oneself

After the private communication between The World and The Sun, the Tarot Gathering began its free discussion session. Audrey asked with great interest about the unique scenery of the sea and of any strange happenings, while Alger gave selective descriptions according to his own knowledge.

Fors listened quietly and was inspired to write a novel about a Pirate King, of how he captures a female passenger and has a complex love affair with her, a fantasy that coexisted with reality.

Derrick could only imagine what the sea looked like based on the paintings in the City of Silver and the corresponding words.

In the end, Klein, whose spirituality was gradually drained, announced the end of the Tarot Gathering. After which, he quickly returned to the real world and made up for it with a nap.

...

Half past seven at night. In Empress Borough. Inside a particular noble's house.

Fors put on a hooded robe. After so many days, she was once again attending the gathering organized by Mr. A.

She sat quietly in a corner, and whilst pretending to casually survey her surroundings, she noticed that Mr. A, who was sitting alone on the sofa, seemed a little different from before.

This wasn't a change in appearance or temperament, because the other party's face was completely hidden in the shadow of his hood, preventing her from making out anything.

The difference she felt was an almost intuitive feeling.

Mr. A is no longer as carefree and indifferent as before, with him always looking at everyone in a supercilious manner. The current him seems to be very repressed—like he's trying his best to control something. He feels a lot more dangerous now.

In the past, Mr. A was a mountain. Now, he's more like a reared up snake, sticking out its tongue vociferously... The best-selling writer,

Fors, suddenly felt grateful that she hadn't gotten Xio to come with her since she needed to hide matters about the Tarot Club and not let her know that she was looking for something in the Sun domain.

This way, even if there are any accidents, my escape would be much easier... She rotated the bracelet which only had two stones left.

She was in no hurry to write down her request to hand over to the attendant. Instead, she patiently observed for a while.

It wasn't that she was naturally cautious, but the lessons of the past had left her with deep impressions. The two stones on her bracelet were evidence of this.

After waiting for more than ten minutes, she finally picked up a piece of paper and a pen in front of her and wrote in deliberately distorted handwriting: "Seeking to buy mystical items or powerful Beyonder weapons in the Sun domain."

After handing the note to the attendant, Fors looked around again, but she couldn't find the Eternal Blazing Sun believer, who had helped with the purification and exorcism ritual, among the disguised or masked figures.

Trades took place as the attendants shuttled about. The entire hall remained quiet and orderly.

After an exchange in the middle of the gathering, Fors's request was added to the two chalkboards right in front.

Not long after, she received a reply from the attendant.

A small slip of white paper was filled with dense words:

"Mystical item: Band of Light ring. It can make the wearer an Envoy of Light, an attendant of the Sun. They will be immune to various diseases and wield sacred powers. The wearer can summon blinding light and use several spells in the Sun domain. It can purify all dead spirits in a fifty-meter radius. It is the nemesis of such creatures.

"If the wearer is acknowledged by the ring, they will be enhanced; otherwise, they will be weakened.

"The only problem is that if the wearer utilizes it too often, they will slowly become a believer of the Eternal Blazing Sun and slowly defend the doctrines and praise the Sun from the bottom of their hearts.

"If you wish to obtain it, then please pay me 9,000 in cash at once. I can wait for you to raise it."

9,000 pounds? Fors's mouth gaped open, as though the other party was robbing her.

This was a huge amount of wealth that she wouldn't be able to borrow, even if she asked someone to lend it to her!

Aside from the deposit for the assassination of the Intis Ambassador, the amount of money she had seen so far combined had never been this high!

A person with 9,000 pounds in cash was considered a tycoon, even in Backlund!

Although I know that mystical items are expensive, I never expected them to be this expensive... Does he plan on getting the 9,000 pounds and not participate in Beyonder gatherings anymore and leave the circle so as to enjoy life in peace? For a moment, she didn't dare to reply to the seller.

She pretended that nothing had happened and listened for nearly ten minutes, but when she received no additional response or response to relatively inexpensive Beyonder weapons, she got up and went to the washroom.

After confirming that no one was around, she closed the toilet door and sat down on the toilet. She recited Mr. Fool's honorific name, told him in prayer about what had just happened, and asked him to pass it on to The World.

Klein, who had heard the layered, illusory sounds, quickly went above the endless gray fog and gained a basic understanding of the situation.

9,000 pounds? He mouthed the number, his expression twisting slightly.

After silently calculating the amount of money he could raise in a short period of time, he let out a breath, conjured the fake person, The World, and manipulated him to give a response:

“The negative effect of this mystical item is too serious. I do not wish to be a believer of the Sun.

“You don’t have to worry about this anymore. We’ll transact using cash instead.

“Pay 450 pounds and you’ll get the formula for Trickmaster.”

The moment he finished his sentence, he cut the connection. Watching as The World disappeared, he raised his hand to rub his forehead and muttered to himself, “Next, I’ll have to see the information on what kind of items that Barbarian lady can gather...

“Otherwise, I can only purchase that brooch from Eye of Wisdom.”

...

In the washroom, Fors let out a sigh of relief. She indicated that she would hold the sacrificial ritual as soon as she got back.

It’s a pity that I don’t know the formula for now. Otherwise, I could take the opportunity to see if there are any Beyonder ingredients I need... She returned to the hall and focused on the information on the two blackboards.

She didn’t respond to the previous note, much less consider bargaining. Even if the seller was willing to discount it by a thousand pounds, she wouldn’t have the money or liquidity to buy it, and more importantly, she felt that Mr. World couldn’t afford it either.

She stayed until the end of the gathering, and because of Mr. A’s changes, she didn’t linger or talk to anyone. She quickly left the house.

After more than ten minutes, the gathering came to a complete end, leaving Mr. A and his attendants alone.

Slowly, Mr. A got up and walked down the stairs to the basement.

Suddenly, his knees buckled, and he fell to the ground, rolling down several steps.

He was sprawled on the ground, and the shadow beneath him quickly turned scarlet red.

His flesh and blood melted and mixed into the shadow, making it look like a brand-new, skinless, monster-like person that had been separated from his body!

Gasp! Gasp... Mr. A's breathing gradually returned to normal as his taut body gradually relaxed.

The blood and flesh, that had separated, flowed back once again.

Everything returned back to normal.

Mr. A crawled forward and knelt in the basement, once again confessing his sins while choking with sobs.

He was confessing for his oversight from before, that he wasn't vigilant enough and caused the Lord's descent to fail.

...

City of Silver, Derrick Berg's house.

He walked in silence a few times around the table, unable to make up his mind. His reasoning told him that Mr. Hanged Man's suggestion was the best one, but the faces of the other members participating in the mission kept flashing in his mind, and he felt that he had abandoned and betrayed them by pretending to lose control!

Is there no way to save them? Should I find a chance to meet with the Chief and tell him that the half-destroyed temple belongs to the Fallen Creator, who's an evil god that controls the Shepherd pathway? That he should be careful of Elder Lovia and change the person responsible for the mission... But how should I explain where I got this information from? In their eyes, Mr. Fool would be the same as an evil god... Derrick pulled his hair in frustration.

The Axe of Hurricane was placed in a position that was within reach of his hands. Every time a bolt of lightning streaked past the window, it emitted a faint light.

Suddenly, Derrick stopped and looked out into the darkness and into the dark sky.

It was as if he had once again seen the state his parents were in before their deaths. He found the pain he had experienced when he stabbed his sword downwards.

There's no time... I need to make preparations for the future so that I wouldn't be suspected for my discovery of that god being the Fallen Creator... As his expression distorted, he clenched his teeth and muttered to himself. He then suddenly left the side of the window and went back to the table. He began practicing the Light Suppliant's Beyonder powers to drain his spirituality as quickly as possible.

...

In the Hall family's luxurious villa.

In an art studio, Audrey leisurely smeared oil paint when she heard a rhythmic knock on the door.

When her maidservant, Annie, opened the door, she saw that it was her mother, Countess Caitlyn.

Although this lady was close to fifty years old, she looked to be in her early thirties. She had blonde hair, green eyes, and a beautiful and graceful appearance, enough to attract the attention of most gentlemen.

"Mother, is something the matter?" Audrey put down the items in her hand and stood up, puzzled.

The Countess looked at her daughter, who was even more beautiful than her younger self. She smiled and said, "I just attended a dinner party. Lady Della said that you're very interested in psychology and that you wanted to hire a tutor, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I haven't decided yet..." Audrey replied hesitantly on purpose, just like she usually did.

How could the Countess not see through her daughter's thoughts? She smiled and said, "She recommended a psychiatrist named Escalante. If you have no problem with that, I'll send someone to invite her to tutor you twice a week. How about that?"

"It's your decision." Audrey's smile blossomed, bit by bit. "Mother, come and sit here. I'm lacking a beautiful model!"

...

On Tuesday morning, Klein confirmed through the Backlund Morning Post that Eye of Wisdom's gathering would be held tomorrow night.

He was relieved as he was no longer worried that his acquisition of the items he needed wouldn't be in time for Miss Sharron's attack on the enemy.

To celebrate the good news, he decided to take a day off at the Quelaag Club.

Chapter 344: Spending Lavishly

Underground shooting range of the Quelaag Club.

When he was done shooting, Klein meticulously serviced his free revolver and adjusted the ratio of purifying bullets, demon hunting bullets, and exorcism bullets to 3:1:1.

Phew. He exhaled, put away the revolver, tidied his coat, and slowly walked back to the hall on the first floor.

He had already heard from the attendant that the dish that was in limited supply today was pan-fried Dragon-Bone Fish.

As soon as he entered the buffet cafeteria, Klein saw an acquaintance, Talim Dumont, the equestrian teacher from an abject noble family with short brown curls. He was eating his lunch with unfocused eyes.

Klein carried his plate over, sat down, and greeted him.

Talim turned his head and glanced at him. His lips quivered a few times, and after three or four seconds of silence, he finally opened his mouth and mumbled, "Sherlock, do you know—do you know rare people who have strange abilities and are very powerful?"

Yes, the one in front of you is one... Klein's eyebrows twitched. He didn't give a direct answer. "What do you want to do?"

Talim opened his mouth but said nothing.

With a solemn expression, he thought for a while before he squeezed out a smile and said, "It's nothing. I was just asking out of curiosity."

He had asked what should a person do if he fell in love with someone he shouldn't have the last time, and this time, he's asking if I know of anyone with strange abilities... Is he trying to get rid of the other party and completely sever his friend's fantasies? Who's worth the risk? Hiring a killer is equivalent to murder! Klein mumbled silently, cut a piece of the fish without any fine bones, and stuffed it into his mouth.

Talim drew a breath, finished the food from his plate quickly, and wiped his mouth with a napkin.

He seemed to return to normal as he said with a smile, “Mike wants to hire you for a few days to be his bodyguard.”

Mike Joseph? The reporter from the Daily Observer? I remember his performance at the Golden Rose was rather brilliant... Klein chuckled.

“What does Mike want to do now?”

Talim spread out his hands and said, “I’m not sure. He just casually mentioned this matter. It seems to have something to do with an interview. He said that he will visit you the day after tomorrow. I hope you have the time to accept this commission.”

“I can’t be sure.” Klein, who didn’t know the details, didn’t give an affirmative answer.

At that moment, he heard a series of illusory pleas from a woman.

Miss Magician? Is she prepared to sacrifice the money in exchange for the formula? Klein picked up his speed and finished the rest of his food. Then, he downed the black tea and went to the reception desk to get the attendant to open a lounge for him.

After sealing the room with a wall of spirituality, he went above the gray fog and found that his judgment was correct. Miss Magician was requesting to hold the sacrificial ritual.

The reason for her delay was that she only had 370 pounds on her, and she had to go to the bank to withdraw some of her savings.

After a series of maneuvering, she saw the 450 pounds vanish into the illusionary door, and an additional formula appeared in her mind:

“Sequence 8, Trickmaster.

“Main ingredients: Stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater, 20 ml of a Deep Sea Marlin’s blood.

“Supplementary ingredients: 5 ml of essential oils made from Hornbeam, 10 grams of String Grass Powder, a blossoming Red Chestnut Flower, 80 ml of pure water.”

Finally, I’ve finally obtained it! It’s been years! Fors couldn’t help pacing back and forth, feeling overjoyed and proud.

Then, not feeling at ease, she took out a pen and a piece of paper, recording down the formula so that she wouldn't forget it and end up having to trouble Mr. Fool.

If I don't meet someone who doesn't know the market well, then the main ingredient is at least 300 pounds, and I only have 430 pounds left... I still need to work hard to earn more money... I-I'm going to write a new book! Fors suddenly felt that she was brimming with motivation. She was no longer the procrastinator she had been before.

...

Five minutes to eight on a Wednesday evening, carrying all his savings, Klein entered the house where the gathering organized by Eye of Wisdom was held.

He was wearing a black robe, with the hood over his face, and an iron mask.

1,674 pounds in cash and 5 gold coins. This is the new peak of my wealth. I wonder how much will remain after this gathering... Klein entered the living room and scanned the room with the help of the candle's flickering light.

Eh, the Apothecary didn't come. Is he caught up with something? Klein frowned slightly and sat in the same position as he did the previous time.

After a few minutes, Eye of Wisdom clapped his hands and said, "Let's begin."

Before he could finish his sentence, someone impatiently spoke up. It was the heavily shrouded lady who seemed to have an Artisan backing her.

She suppressed her voice and asked, "Is the friend who wanted to sell the Briber formula last time here?" "I'm here," Klein answered simply.

The lady heaved a sigh of relief, pushed her iron mask down and said, "This time, there's a Beyonder weapon that you need. Of course, you can also choose cash."

“What’s the Beyonder weapon?” Klein suppressed the eagerness in his heart.

The lady organized her words and said, “This is a whip woven from the feathers of the Holy Sunbird.

“You can usually disguise it as a belt.

“When used, it will be covered with pure holy flames of light. Any undead monsters that are whipped by it will suffer great damage, and the weaker ones would even be directly obliterated.

“It can also be used to soak in liquids to create Sun Holy Water. But that would reduce the spirituality’s durability. Every use will decrease its durability by a month.

“Currently, it has thirteen months of effective durability.

“If you are willing, you can exchange it for the Briber formula without paying any additional cash.”

Holy Sunbird? It’s not the Sun Divine Bird. If it’s the latter’s feathers, I’ll take it! Of course, only tail feathers would do. They can be used to concoct the Sequence 4’s Unshadowed potion... Klein was quite satisfied with the weapon itself, but the problem was that it could only be used for thirteen months. Every time he made Sun Holy Water, the durability would be reduced by a month. In time, he would have to replenish it with something similar.

With this in mind, he turned to look at the seat of honor.

“Mr. Eye of Wisdom, can you describe, in detail, the brooch you introduced last time?

“Oh, write it down on paper and indicate the price that would satisfy you.”

He was afraid that the others would be interested in the brooch and thus raise the price, so he decided at the last second to get Eye of Wisdom to write it down.

“Alright.” Eye of Wisdom laughed and asked an attendant to bring him a pen and paper.

While he was writing, the members of the gathering continued their trade. There were even some who were tempted as they asked about the price of the whip, only to receive an answer to wait.

After a while, the Eye of Wisdom finished writing the introduction and passed it to Klein through the attendant.

When Klein unrolled it, he saw that the words on the paper were written in print, preventing him from noticing anything special about them.

Very careful... He started to read carefully:

“Sun Brooch. It can also be called Midsummer, and it is considered a relatively weaker Grade 2 Sealed Artifact.

“With it acting as the center, it will fill a ten-meter radius with pure and warm energy. Normal people will not be able to sense it, but undead spirits and monsters will suffer constant damage, and they will quickly ‘evaporate’ like a pool of water under a blazing fireball. Even wraiths and shadows will suffer the same fate, albeit lasting a little longer.

“In such an environment, the strength of powerful undead creatures will be significantly weakened.

“It will be very difficult for the wearer to be possessed or corrupted by evil spirits or monsters. Allows use of spells such as Holy Light Summoning, Holy Water Creation, Fire of Light, Cleave of Purification, Horror Immunity, Holy Oath, and Sun Halo.

“The downside is that, as long as you carry it, you will never be able to feel cool. You will always be experiencing a terrible heat. Young man, don’t underestimate this state. The hot and irritated you will slowly step into the abyss of losing control.

“I will only sell it for 2,000 pounds.

“Don’t try to bargain. As you know, I’m not too short of money, and I’m a collector.”

It's much stronger than I imagined. Eye of Wisdom had been very vague the last time... Klein's heart skipped a beat. After a few seconds of thought, he looked over at the woman with the Artisan backing her.

"900 pounds in cash."

The average price for a Sequence 7 potion formula was around 800 pounds.

"Deal!" the lady answered without hesitation.

...If I had known, I would have offered 1,000 pounds... Klein forced a smile.

He was a man of his word, and, without reneging his offer, he exchanged his prepared formula for 900 pounds in cash. In an instant, his wealth soared to 2,574 pounds. It was enough to make a bachelor man live a pretty good life for the rest of his life.

After Eye of Wisdom's appraisal, the lady looked at the formula once more in satisfaction.

"Sequence 7: Briber.

"Main ingredients: One Weeping Infant Flower, Strange-faced Cannabis Crystal.

"Supplementary ingredients: 5 drops of golden Jimsonweed juice, 5 drops of black Jimsonweed juice, 4 drops of Fantasy Grass essential oil, 80 ml of red wine."

After completing the transaction, Klein drew a deep breath, looked at Eye of Wisdom, and solemnly said, "2,000 pounds. I want that Sun Brooch."

Eye of Wisdom chuckled and said, "To be honest, I really don't wish to sell it, but since I have 2-081, Sun Brooch isn't necessary to me. Besides, I have already named my price, and reneging isn't my style.

"Wait three minutes for me. I'll get the Sun Brooch."

"Alright," Klein replied, feeling both expectant and also feeling the pinch.

At this point, the Beyonders in the activity room cast their gazes on him. A deal of 2,000 pounds rarely appeared at this level of ordinary gatherings, perhaps not even once in a year or two.

Klein could feel the greed and covetous feelings in their eyes.

After a short silence, the transactions continued until Eye of Wisdom returned. In his open palm lay a dark golden brooch shaped like a sunbird.

It was obvious that the Eye of Wisdom had some sweat on his face.

"You can confirm it before you pay." The hooded Eye of Wisdom walked directly to Klein and handed the dark golden brooch to him.

Very generous... Klein reached out to take it, but before he could examine it closely, he felt his surroundings become very hot, even the wind felt as if it had been ignited. Once it entered his nose, it would spread to his lungs.

At this moment, he seemed to have left the cold and humid Backlund, finding himself in the desert and wilderness, right in the middle of the Northern Continent. Hanging above him was the sun that radiated endless light and heat, and in his surroundings was the extremely dry and boundless yellow sand.

Phew, it makes me want to eat ice cream... Sweat slowly seeped out of Klein's forehead, but under the iron mask, the liquid couldn't fall freely. It could only stick on the spot.

Through direct contact, he could feel the pure and warm power radiating out, but the Beyonders around him were not affected in the slightest.

After fixing the brooch in place, Klein released his spirituality and infused it into the dark golden surface.

With a boom, he saw the sky filled with dancing dots of pure gold light as he received a great deal of information.

This included how to use some of the spells in the Sun domain with the help of the brooch.

Most important of all were the tricks to injecting spirituality and the corresponding activation incantations!

One of them included providing the brooch with two seconds of spirituality, allowing it to summon a holy beam of light that descended from the sky to purify the undead and inflict certain damage on other targets.

A continuous supply of spirituality for five seconds, together with the use of the word "Sun" in ancient Hermes, would create a small amount

of Sun Holy Water, which would exorcise evil spirits, drive away the cold, and purify wraiths.

In addition to the difference between strength and time intervals, the other corresponding spells could be cast as well.

Fire of Light was a sacred, concentrated flame that suddenly appeared out of thin air via a mere thought. Cleave of Purification was an effective attack against wraiths, and it could also be used to augment bullets. Horror Immunity allowed the wearer to no longer feel fear. Holy Oath was used to temporarily strengthen one's strength, agility, fire damage, and holy damage via chanting the corresponding ancient Hermes term. Sun Halo targeted comrades who were within twenty meters of him. It could effectively boost their courage and purify the evil energies within their bodies.

Not bad. Other than not being strange enough, it doesn't have too many flaws. It complements my Magician abilities nicely... It's just a little hot... Klein's mind was filled with fantasies about himself in short-sleeved clothes.

He rolled up his robe, took out a stack of bills from his inside pocket. Together with the 900 pounds he had just received from the lady with the Artisan backing her, he counted 2,000 pounds in cash before handing it to Eye of Wisdom's attendant.

After counting thrice and finally confirming that there was no mistake, Klein looked at his rapidly shrinking wallet, feeling both happy and sad at the same time.

The money he had painstakingly saved had been reduced to 574 pounds and five gold coins.

However, he also obtained his second mystical item. The number of side effects was obviously fewer than the Master Key. It was a mystical item which was more outstanding, the Sun Brooch!

The only drawback is it's just too hot... Klein reached out and touched his iron mask, and he nearly took it off to start using it to fan himself.

With the reduction of his funds, Klein stopped considering the notion of purchasing anything else. He just sat there quietly, listening until the end of the gathering.

Stimulated by the massive deal of 2,000 pounds, the gathering that night was relatively lively. For example, the whip woven from the feathers of the Holy Sunbird was sold for 850 pounds. Eye of Wisdom also made several purchases, buying an ancient book and a Beyonder ingredient.

When the gathering ended, Eye of Wisdom surveyed the room and looked at Klein. He said with a chuckle, "You shall be the first to leave."

Is he afraid that someone will rob me... Klein thanked him sincerely and walked out of the living room under the guidance of the attendant. He then impatiently took off his hooded robe and iron mask.

He had already tried to use his spirituality to wrap and seal the Sun Brooch. It prevented it from constantly purifying the surroundings and prevented its existence from being discovered by other Beyonders. However, the negative effects couldn't be weakened, unless it was not on his person.

In order to ensure my mental health, I should only use it only when necessary. I can usually rely on purifying bullets and exorcism bullets... Klein left the gathering venue and took a long detour before arriving outside the Bravehearts Bar.

He entered, circled the area, and quickly came out again and hired a carriage.

Unsurprisingly, he quickly saw a figure in a black regal dress outline itself opposite him.

Sharron's appearance had not changed at all. She asked in an ethereal voice, "Are you done with your preparations?"

"Yes, you can choose the ambush location and time. Notify me once you have confirmed the details." Klein nodded calmly.

Sharron looked at him and said, "Okay."

Seeing that she was about to disappear, Klein added, “Have Kaspars prepare a box of explosives and bury them all over the planned battlefield.”

Sharron was silent for two seconds before she said, “Steve is also a demolition expert.”

“No, my main purpose is not to blast anyone apart.” Klein smiled. “I just want to put on some fireworks.”

Sharron stared at him for a few seconds, then she nodded.

Witnessing her figure fading rapidly, Klein leaned back against the wall and opened the window, letting the bone-piercing wind in, but he still felt hot.

Back on Earth, I hated summer the most. Hmm, I like ice pops, ice cream, cold drinks, watermelons... as he mumbled, Klein reached into his pocket and held the Sun Brooch.

This is a mystical item worth 2,000 pounds!

Returning to Minsk Street, Klein walked slowly along the road lined with trees to Unit 15.

When he passed Lawyer Jurgen’s house, he subconsciously looked inside and saw the gas lamp with a slightly blue glow.

There’s someone home... Klein laughed as he sighed, his forehead constantly beaded with sweat.

...

Early the next day, on a Thursday morning.

Klein had just come out of the bathroom with a newspaper in hand when he heard the doorbell ring.

Who is it? Right, Talim mentioned that Reporter Mike Joseph will be coming to me today... Amid the tinkling bells, Klein came to the door and reached for the handle.

The image of the visitor naturally appeared in his mind:

He was about thirty years old, with a black tweed coat and a matching half top hat. He had sparse eyebrows, charming blue eyes, and a handsome mustache. But his skin was rather rough. He was none other than the reporter from the Daily Observer, Mike Joseph.

“Good morning, Mike. Talim told me about you,” Klein opened the door and greeted him.

He hadn’t hesitated to throw the Sun Brooch above the gray fog.

Mike Joseph pulled his bow tie and said, “Sorry for disturbing you so early, but I have matters to deal with later.”

“I understand,” Klein said politely, “Have you had breakfast? Would you like to try my toast?” Mike suddenly smiled.

“I’m so sorry, that would be so nice of you.

“If it’s possible, could I also have a cup of hot coffee. Milk would do too. I noticed that you ordered fresh milk.” “...Alright.” Klein smiled in response.

He busied himself with the toast, poured the milk, took out a tin of butter, and sat down, eating without a word.

Across from him, Mike was enjoying his breakfast without restraint, oblivious to the silence.

Phew... Klein exhaled and put down his cup.

“Mike, you wanted to hire me to protect you?”

Mike set his knife and fork down slowly and took a mouthful of milk.

“Yes, about two days, Friday and Saturday, maybe even Sunday morning.”

“Who wants to hurt you?” Klein asked in deliberation.

Mike chuckled and said, “No, this is just a form of proactive selfprotection.

“The editor of the newspaper arranged for me to do an investigation in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. It’s said that it’s sponsored by some Church or aristocrat. “As you know, gangs run

rampant in East Borough. There are thugs everywhere, and there are people who are willing to betray their conscience just to scrounge a meal. I need a bodyguard who is good at fighting and shooting.

"And most private detectives have certain connections in East Borough, don't they?"

I don't... I rely on mysticism to crack cases, no—deduction! Klein thought for a moment and said, "But I might not have the time in the next few days."

I have to see when Miss Sharron will be taking action.

Mike cleared his throat and said, "I've already applied for ten pounds. This protection mission will amount to ten pounds, even if nothing happens." Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"Mike, I'm serious.

"Tomorrow at this time, oh—come after breakfast to look for me. If I have availed myself, I will take this commission. If I'm really busy, then I will introduce you to other detectives. They're also good at fighting and shooting."

For example, Stuart or Kaslana... Two names flashed through his mind.

Mike finished the remaining toast and said, "That wouldn't be an issue."

After breakfast, Klein watched the journalist leave his home and admired the sights of the freezing rain outside through the oriel window—the passing carriages and pedestrians, the dark sky, and the colorful umbrellas.

Finally, a normal mission... It neither involves Beyonders nor does it have anything to do with finding cats and catching adulterers. It's a pity that it isn't a commission regarding a murder case or something like that. Otherwise, I would be able to experience what it feels like to be a true detective... There is always only one truth [1]*!* Klein's thoughts wandered aimlessly as he felt an inexplicable sense of carefreeness.

If not for the fact that he was still worried about the situation regarding Sharron and Maric, he planned to relax completely, visit all kinds of museums, buy a ticket to a large theater, listen to a few operas and musicals, and enjoy the delicacies of the various nations that had gathered in Backlund city.

Well, I'm a casual tourist, a lonely gourmet... Klein gave a selfdeprecating laugh, turned around, and walked towards the sofa, intending to look through the newspapers he hadn't finished reading.

Suddenly, he noticed that a slip of paper had appeared on the coffee table. The handwriting was elegant and reserved: "Tonight at 10 o'clock. We'll meet at the back door of Bravehearts Bar."

Klein was stunned for a moment. He turned his head to look outside the window, sighed, and said, *Is it finally starting...*

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1. A catchphrase from Detective Conan.

10 o'clock at night, in the alley by the back door of the Bravehearts Bar.

Like the previous time, Klein, in his black double-breasted frock coat and matching half top hat, had merely circled the bar once before he walked to the nearest street as though he were on a stroll.

Just as he walked out of the alley, a carriage stopped in front of him. Behind the glass window was Maric's pair of brown eyes which were still suppressing any signs of malicious intent.

Klein pressed the top of his half top hat and, holding the sturdy cane in his hand, calmly boarded the carriage as if he had hailed it himself.

He sat down and straightened his bow tie like a gentleman attending a banquet.

"That outfit isn't suitable for battle." Maric, who was wearing a white shirt, black vest, and tights, sized him up a few times and frowned.

It was obvious that he still had some doubts regarding Klein's strength, but he had chosen to trust Sharron.

Klein smiled casually and said, "My Beyonder powers are different from yours. Our fighting styles are different too. This type of clothing will not affect me negatively in any way; it even suits me very well. For example, it has a lot of pockets, and they can be used to store different items in different places, so as to avoid taking the wrong things when in a hurry and losing my life through such a laughable mistake."

As he spoke, he took out the remaining three sedatives from a sewn concealed pocket—they were the special sedatives concocted by the Apothecary!

Just as he finished his sentence, a figure quickly outlined itself on a window of the carriage.

A figure wearing a long black regal dress and a small soft hat.

It was none other than the Sequence 5 Beyonder of the Mutant pathway, Wraith Sharron.

“You explain too much.” Sharron looked at Klein and said in an ethereal tone, “Not natural enough.”

... I just wanted to get into the act... Klein laughed dryly and replied, “Probably it’s because I’m a bit nervous.”

Without waiting for Sharron to speak again, he handed the three sedatives to Maric.

“Find a chance to drink it yourself.

“I’m sure that you’re more experienced than I am. You won’t drink it too early or too late, much less drink too little or too much.”

Maric looked at the sealed and transparent glass test tube, gently shaking the liquid inside and said, “Two and a half. Any more and I will really be sedated. I wouldn’t do anything for a short period of time.”

“Very good,” Klein praised and turned to look at Sharron. “Have you guys decided on the ambush spot?” Sharron nodded.

“We’re on the way there.”

She didn’t directly reveal the intended location to Klein.

Very prudent, very careful... Klein thought for a moment before asking, “Will you be hurt by purification?”

“As a zombie, yes. Same when I’m in my spirit state,” Sharron explained succinctly.

In other words, when a Sequence 5 Wraith is still in their physical state, the purification effects wouldn’t be effective... Klein thoughtfully asked, “What about exorcism?

“What about demon-hunting?”

As they were dealing with a Beyonder of the same pathway, Sharron didn’t hide anything from him.

“Demon-hunting will deal damage to our bodies. Likewise for exorcism, to both our bodies and spiritual bodies. But it wouldn’t be fatal.”

Klein curled his lips into a smile and exhaled.

"I understand."

He pondered for a moment, and he asked again after some deliberation, "Do you feel the power of purification and exorcism now?"

"No," Maric replied hoarsely.

Very good, this spirituality cage, modified from a wall of spirituality, is indeed able to isolate the effects of the Sun Brooch. However, I'm so hot... Klein secretly sighed and confirmed, "Wraith Steve, Zombie Jason, and Werewolf Tyre, do they have any other mystical items or Beyonder weapons besides the Scarlet Lunar Corona?"

"We don't know." Maric pinched his glabella, looking a bit irritated.

With the battle at hand, he couldn't help but be stirred by these emotions while suppressing his maliciousness and desires.

Sharron listened silently and replied without any hints of discomposure, "When influenced by the Scarlet Lunar Corona, Jason and Tyre will be in a rather fervent state.

"Even if they have mystical items, they would lack the reason to use them."

"Unless it's something passive," added Maric. "But to a Werewolf, their claws are their Beyonder weapons. It's the same for me, Tyre, and Jason. It can tear through steel and comes with venom."

Klein's eyes darted about as he nodded.

"Alright, I have no more questions."

In the night with few pedestrians, the carriage sped across the streets, its wheels going over puddles of water from time to time, splattering fine dirt onto itself.

After ten minutes or so, Maric had the zombie driver stop the carriage.

Klein looked out through the glass window and saw a dark, dilapidated building. Not far away, the sound of running water could be heard.

“This is the West Balam dock that has been abandoned for a year and is about to be rebuilt. Our planned ambush point will be around its warehouses,” Maric introduced.

The abandoned West Balam dock... If an accident were to really happen, the Tussock River would be the best escape route... According to my previous survey, there is a Lever Cathedral about two kilometers northwest of here, one belonging to the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery... Klein quickly recalled his surroundings.

He disembarked from the carriage, tidied up his clothes in a leisurely manner, and, with his cane in hand, followed Sharron and Maric into the dock which awaited renovations.

After walking for about five minutes, they came to an open space surrounded by several warehouses.

The soil here was dark brown, with withered weeds lying everywhere. A wooden chest quietly sat in a dark corner.

“Those are the explosives you asked for.” Maric pointed.

Klein immediately nodded and said, “Aren’t you afraid that a tramp might steal them?”

“My zombies are sleeping underground here. If anyone enters, they will scare that person away.” Maric pointed to a few other spots. “Avoid them when you bury the explosives.”

“No problem.” Klein smiled and nodded before asking, “Will my purification and exorcism effects hurt your guys?”

“No, they are equivalent to corpses when in deep slumber, and there’s also a thick layer of soil shielding them.” Maric gave an affirmative answer.

After looking around, Sharron became talkative for once.

“Stay here and make your preparations. We’ll go and lure the enemy over.

“It won’t take more than thirty minutes. Please make use of the time.

“After you finish your preparations, hide in a warehouse. Don’t be in a hurry to make your move. Make sure to be patient.

“No matter how dangerous the situation is, treat it as normal.

“When I become weak and the Scarlet Lunar Corona appears, you can use that ‘eye’ to search for Steve and launch a sudden attack on him. I will also use my mystical item to complement you.”

Klein listened attentively, chuckled, and said, “A very simple plan.”

“The simpler the plan, the more effective it is,” Sharron calmly responded.

Maric pinched his forehead, shook his head, and said, “Steve isn’t a fool. If any problem arises in a complicated plan, it will lead to a complete disaster.

After they finished their exchange, Sharron vanished and Maric quickly departed from the dock.

After watching them leave, Klein took out a small square metal box from his pocket. Its surface was covered in a thin film of spirituality. This was the spirituality cage that had been modified from a wall of spirituality.

It could, to some extent, isolate the outside world from the effects of certain mystical items, but it couldn’t abate the negative effects they had on the possessor.

Of course, Sealed Artifacts which were too powerful or too strange were definitely not something that a spirituality cage could deal with. They required a special sealing environment that was specially designed for it.

Four warehouses, overgrown with weeds. The ground is muddy from the rain earlier... Klein took out a piece of paper and shook it.

Pa!

The paper quickly became taut and as hard as an iron plate.

Klein held the note and dug a shallow hole in the middle of the open ground. He buried the small square iron box in his hand. There was only a thin layer of soil between it and the outside world.

Next, he took out the explosives from the wooden box and buried them in different corners and in different warehouses.

He buried the remaining explosive sticks near the center.

After finishing all of this, he took out his revolver and adjusted the ratio of the bullets again—3 purifying bullets and 2 exorcism bullets.

Putting away the revolver in his underarm holster, Klein tidied his clothes, walked to a gap between two warehouses, and threw a paper figurine there, right above some buried explosives.

He examined his surroundings again, and then he took out another square metal box. He removed the spirituality cage on its surface and took out the dark golden sunbird shaped brooch, solemnly wearing it on his left chest.

Phew... Klein let out a breath, left the place, circled the exterior, threw out some inconspicuous items, and burned away the used piece of paper.

When he returned, he climbed to the top of one of the warehouses and hid in the shadows.

Reaching out his hand, he counted and confirmed the various charms, extract, and herbal powders. He touched the iron cigar case and snapped his fingers.

The paper figurine he had left between the two warehouses stood up and transformed into a gentleman wearing a black double-breasted frock coat, a silk half top hat, and was holding a hard cane.

The gentleman's position was rather remote and hidden, making it difficult for anyone who came in from the outside to notice him.

With his stand-in present, Klein's figure disappeared from where he stood.

However, his vision wasn't affected in any way, and he could clearly see the road that led to the clearing.

Even though he had made preparations and had experienced many battles, Klein was still a bit afraid and nervous at that very moment.

No matter how good a performance was, it could still be seen through!

Furthermore, the enemy was a Sequence 5 wielding a mystical item! There was also a Sequence 6 and Sequence 7!

Is this the state every magician is in before he goes onstage? Klein took a silent breath, suppressing his emotions and the heat of his body.

That night, the crimson moon was constantly obscured by the clouds, and there was only a glimmer of light in the clearing.

Before long, Klein saw three figures rapidly approaching.

One in front, one in the middle, and one at the back!

Running ahead of the group was Maric. His disheveled hair was completely blown back by the wind, and his expression was twisted and hideous.

He was even faster than a steam locomotive at its peak speed. With a whoosh, he arrived at the entrance to the clearing.

But even so, he was still unable to escape from his pursuers.

The closest figure to him was a man who had the same pale complexion as himself, with indistinct, dark patches on his face, as if they were healing marks from rotting wounds. The malice in his eyes was completely undisguised and unrestrained. He looked more like a zombie who was craving fresh flesh rather than a human being, and Klein guessed that he was Jason, a Sequence 6.

The distance between Jason and Maric remained within seven or eight meters, sometimes lengthening; sometimes shortening. This repeated again and again, as they ventured back and forth.

More than ten meters behind them, a figure was left far behind. It was a thin but muscular man; his hair was shaved very short, and his hair stood erect like spikes.

As he swung his arms, the tip of his palms flashed with a metallic light, reflecting the weak crimson moonlight. Those were black fingernails which were as long as daggers!

Werewolf Tyre... Klein chanted the person's Sequence and name silently. In his mind, the wall that was splashed with blood appeared in his mind. It was a scene with intestines and limbs splattered all over the ground.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Maric used all his strength as he ran while Jason gritted his teeth and ran as fast as he could. At some point, the healed dark spots on his face began to swell, as if some sort of rotten liquid was about to ooze out.

The two of them left the puddles of water and moist soil that were turning into white frost in their wake.

The withered weeds were lifted up by the wind created by the two of them. As they slowly fell down, they began to rot and decay at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Suddenly, a pale hand reached out of the frosted soil and accurately grabbed Jason's ankle.

Pa!

Jason twisted his body and forcefully kicked out, breaking the hand's wrist and sending it flying. The remaining stump's flesh and blood had long since rotten, and white maggots struggled to squirm outwards.

Maric stopped, pinched his lips with his right hand, and let out a shrill whistle.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The soil in different parts of the clearing were lifted, and the expressionless corpses sat up.

At the same time, a chilly wind suddenly swirled. Countless transparent shadows seemed to have caught the scent of a bloody feast, and none of them wanted to fall behind as they rushed towards Jason. Some pulled his arms, some pulled his calves, and some even hugged his head.

Jason stopped and grunted.

The shadows flew out, one after another—some of them screamed miserably and disappeared, while others stayed in their original spots, lost.

At almost the same time, Maric and Jason both raised their right hands, thumbs held up beside their forefingers, with their index fingers aiming at each other.

Silently, the air between them exploded as black wisps of air billowed upwards.

Maric took a step back, and a few strands of his disheveled hair withered in a blink of an eye and fluttered to the ground.

“Maric, you’re still so weak. You still don’t understand how to use the power of desire!” Jason said with a low, hoarse laugh.

At this moment, Werewolf Tyre had already arrived at his side. As for Steve, the Sequence 5 Beyonder in charge of the operation, was nowhere to be found.

“Don’t be in such a hurry to finish off Maric. Wait for Sharron to come and save him, Lord Steve is about to arrive,” Werewolf Tyre whispered to Jason.

He then extended his bright red tongue and licked his lips.

“I wonder what Sharron will look like when she has her clothes

off...”

Before he could finish his sentence, he suddenly saw Jason turn his head. His face was deathly pale, and there were two identical figures in his eyes.

Black regal dress, light blonde hair, exquisite face, and pale skin!

Pa!

He struck out with both palms and gripped Werewolf Tyre’s neck. The creaking sound of bones giving way sounded out.

Wraith Sharron had attacked!

Tyre inhaled sharply, making his neck bulge like a water pipe. It grew strands of stiff black hair and briefly resisted the force that would snap his windpipe and neck.

His eyes gradually rolled backward, showing its whites as his red tongue hung out and sticky saliva drooled down his lips.

However, his right hand had accurately reached into his pocket.

He had cracked a preset spirituality seal!

The empty clearing, together with the warehouses, suddenly lit up as crimson moonlight filled the entire area.

Jason’s grip on Werewolf Tyre’s neck began to weaken, and a figure in a small, soft hat appeared behind him.

Tyre's face broke into a smile that was both smug and cruel. His right hand took out a miniature "full moon" from his pocket, a crimson "full moon!"

It was a dark red accessory that constantly emitted a serene luster. Shaped like a full moon, it had crimson rubies embedded along its circumference. In the middle was a symbol that symbolized the moon, as well as many other mysterious labels.

Sharron narrowed her eyes instinctively and retreated two steps back. Her incorporeality slowly receded.

Her legs no longer seemed capable of supporting her weight. She fell limply to the ground, her black and complicated regal dress stained with dust and mud.

Werewolf Tyre raised the palm-sized round accessory high up into the air, laughing as he gasped for breath.

"Lord Steve was right. You would definitely attempt to counterattack. And Sharron, your target for possession would definitely be Jason, whose Sequence is higher than mine. Therefore, the Scarlet Lunar Corona was given to me.

"Guess, where is he now?"

This... This isn't as Sharron had expected... It seems like I can only choose the best opportunity to strike myself... Klein frowned as he heard this, and he forcefully suppressed the anxiety in his heart.

At this point, Werewolf Tyre was in no hurry to attack. He knew that the longer the effects of the Scarlet Lunar Corona lasted, the weaker Sharron would become, and the more Maric would be in pain.

In Jason's cold eyes, which usually had a hint of savagery and madness, there was no longer any rationality in them left.

He was also affected by the Scarlet Lunar Corona, but he was used to indulging in his desires, so he didn't feel any pain.

Instead, he felt a thirst for the fresh flesh before his eyes.

Gasp!

Jason let out a low, inhuman growl from his throat. His exposed skin and hair turned white.

At that moment, Sharron raised her arms with difficulty and used her left hand to remove the black glove that she wore on her right palm. Jason happened to lunge at her, and a thin layer of ice covered the soil around her!

Suddenly, endless rays of light burst forth from Sharron's palm.

As they fed on Sharron's spirituality, they interweaved in front of the doll-like lady to form a bronze door, which was covered with mysterious patterns and filled with an indescribable smell.

The door swung open with a creak and a crack appeared!

From the crack, pairs of pale or transparent hands or arms covered in teeth or bloody, skinless arms, stretched out, crossed the void, and grabbed Zombie Jason!

Indescribable pairs of eyes were hidden in the darkness behind the door, quietly watching the prey in front of them.

Before he could even react, Jason was grabbed by the arms, and he was entangled by smooth and incorporeal tentacles! These tentacles were dark-green vines that had countless baby faces protruding out!

These strange entities were crying and laughing as they tried to drag Zombie Jason behind the door.

Even though his thoughts were completely controlled by his bloodlust and the urge to kill, Jason instinctively felt afraid.

Gasp!

The sound from his throat suddenly intensified, and layers of frost immediately appeared on the worrisome-looking arm. The baby faces that protruded out of the dark-green vines emitted painful groans as they continuously dripped with decayed, turbid yellow liquid.

The pulling force abated, but it did not disappear.

Jason kept directing ghosts to interfere, but it was like throwing a stone into the sea. Even when he tried to use spells from Death's domain, they failed to deliver any striking results.

His body began moving uncontrollably towards the crack of the illusory mysterious door. Occasionally, he would manage to struggle and retreat a little.

As he had taken a sedative in advance, Maric was not completely taken down by the pain. Taking advantage of this, he took out the last two sedatives, broke the bottle with a snap, and drank one and a half glasses in one go.

The suppressed malice in his eyes weakened, and his twisted expression returned to normal. He swept his gaze at Werewolf Tyre.

At the same time, with a swoosh, Tyre's thin but muscular body disappeared and reappeared more than ten meters away.

As his figure began outlining itself, an illusory image was left behind. A black aura that seemed to be alive rose up from the ground, pierced through the remnant images, and disappeared with a flicker.

Tyre hadn't used Blink, as his Sequence didn't have the corresponding Beyonder powers to do so.

He had relied on the Scarlet Lunar Corona to push him to his maximum speed!

The speed at which he moved at produced afterimages!

At that moment, Klein, who was hiding in the shadows at the top of the warehouse, also reached into his pocket with his left hand, touching the iron cigar case. He removed its surface spirituality cage and gently opened the case.

He was sure that Wraith Steve had already arrived at the scene; otherwise, Jason definitely would've been dragged behind the terrible door if the deadlock continued. As for Werewolf Tyre, despite being augmented by the Scarlet Lunar Corona, he was unable to instantly finish Maric off. When Sharron aimed the Door of Mysteries at the Werewolf, the Scarlet Lunar Corona would end up changing owners.

As soon as Klein's fingers touched the All-Black Eye inside the metal cigar case, his mind filled with crazy, foul, and terrifying ravings!

There were terrifying ravings that made his blood vessels bulge. He felt as though his eyes were cracking, and his head could explode at any moment.

And in the midst of these ravings, Klein saw strange, mysterious, and illusory black threads. They were divided into groups, some of them extending to Sharron's body, some of them from Werewolf Tyre. They intertwined with each other without entangling themselves as they extended into the void.

Among them, many of the black lines came from a spot not far away from Maric, and they didn't overlap!

Wraith Steve! He wants to possess Maric! With a thought, Klein retracted his left hand.

Instead of drawing his gun to shoot, he snapped his fingers without making much of a sound.

Boom!

An explosion suddenly occurred between the two warehouses. The raging flames and heat caused a figure wearing a black double-breasted frock coat to float out.

After catching the attention of the others, Klein quickly drew his gun and pulled the trigger at the spot he remembered.

At the same time, the dark golden Sunbird brooch on his chest flashed with a ray of light.

He added Cleave of Purification to the purifying bullet!

Bang!

The bullet shot out with a faint golden beam of light.

A faint golden stream of light flashed past, hitting what seemed like an empty space.

However, resplendent flames suddenly rose up from that spot, rapidly forming a silhouette who was wearing a black tuxedo and a dark red cloak.

The figure's left arm was burning with holy and pure flames as it continuously emitted faint black and green smoke, illuminating his pale face in dark green glow.

It was a man in his forties with oily hair that was neatly combed with meticulous attention. His eyes were dark and green, and while possessing no emotion, there were no signs of pain!

Wraith Steve!

He turned his head and looked maliciously at Klein, who was at the top of the warehouse.

Klein was startled as he felt his body suddenly turn cold. Even the heat brought by the Sun Brooch couldn't counteract it.

His body stiffened quickly, and his eyes glazed over. His pupils reflected the same two figures: a black tuxedo, a dark red cloak, a head of hair slathered with oil, a pair of dark green eyes, and the pale face of a man in his forties!

Almost in an instant, Klein was placed under Steve's control, his thoughts gradually numbing.

This was the ability of a Sequence 5 Wraith!

It was a strange and hardly defensible ability!

Fortunately, he was adequately aware of everything beforehand and was already prepared for it. Moreover, the exorcism effect could effectively resist the possession of evil spiritual beings, so before his ability to think had completely disappeared, he stimulated the spirituality of his Soul Body and injected it into the dark golden Sunbird brooch.

Just as he was about to raise his hand to grab hold of his neck, a warm and pure ray of light suddenly descended from the sky.

It was like a pillar of light from the Sun, bringing with it a feeling of brilliance and holy purification as it enveloped Klein within.

It was a spell from the Sun domain, Holy Light Summoning!

Amidst the holy light, the formless possession ability was weakened, and Klein's eyes suddenly regained their luster.

In close succession, his body ignited, becoming brittle and charred, leaving behind a thin piece of paper.

At the same time, between the gaps of the two warehouses, Klein, in his double-breasted frock coat and matching silk half top hat, jumped out of the roaring flames from the previous explosion.

His cane had been thrown away somewhere long ago, and the same figure floating above his head had also been successfully destroyed by the flames. It turned into pieces of ashes and scattered in every direction.

Before Klein could confirm his situation, he felt an invisible grip on his ankle.

There was a firm grip on his calves, arms, chest, and clothes!

In his Spirit Vision which had long been activated, Klein saw blurry, transparent figures. Some of them were incomplete, some were covered in blood, some of them had burnt black skin, and others were pale and cold.

Phew... A cold wind of unknown origins blew at his neck, making his hair stand on end and made his body tremble uncontrollably.

The dark golden Sunbird brooch in front of him suddenly flashed with a brilliant light, and golden illusory flames started flaring up around him one after another!

These flames emitted the aura of the sun, and because they were so dense, they formed a sea.

This was the "Fire of Light" from the Sun domain!

The ghastly ghosts around Klein shrieked silently and vanished, and the cold wind at the back of his head was replaced by the scorching heat of the Sun Brooch.

Klein, who was temporarily safe in this environment, couldn't help but sigh in fear.

Even though he had prepared ahead of time and had obtained items to counter his opponent, a one on one battle with a Sequence 5 Wraith was still precarious. The "performance" had almost ended in failure from the very beginning!

Not too far away from Maric, the dark red-cloaked Steve's figure turned slightly incorporeal. The bright flames on his left arm were quickly extinguished under the onslaught of the black aura.

His eyes shone with dark green light, filled with malice and desire. He seemed to have lost his mind and ability to think.

At this moment, with the shot's warning, Maric had distanced himself and directed the numb-faced zombies who had crawled out of the earth to surround Werewolf Tyre. He created slippery layers of ice and rotting sludge in an attempt to affect his enemy's movements.

Werewolf Tyre held onto the tiny full moon that was emitting crimson light as he ran without stopping. When he was blocked by a zombie, he casually swiped down.

Whoosh!

The zombie was immediately split into six pieces. The long rotten flesh and wriggling maggots sprinkled all over the ground.

Werewolf Tyre froze for a moment, looking at his claws in disbelief.

Only then did he understand that the augmentation that the Scarlet Lunar Corona brought him wasn't only restricted to speed.

He felt that he had mastered some powerful and strange spell!

Tyre stopped running and turned to face the pale Maric.

At this moment, Zombie Jason was drawing closer to the illusory but mysterious door. His body was covered with dark-green vines that had

baby faces protruding. He was being dragged by arms that were either full of teeth or were skinless.

His eyes were almost touching the crack of the bronze door as he stared coldly at the indescribable eyes hidden in the darkness.

It was as if that place was the final resting place for his heart.

"No!"

His body, which was controlled by bloodlust and the desire to kill, shouted out shrilly.

Werewolf Tyre, who was about to counterattack, stopped instantaneously. Clenching his teeth, he threw the miniature version of the crimson full moon at Steve.

Only by allowing a Sequence 5 Beyonder to regain his strength would he be augmented, allowing the battle to come to a quick end. Only then would Jason have a chance of being rescued!

Upon seeing this, Klein's eyes lit up, and he immediately snapped his fingers.

Pa!

Boom!

In the Scarlet Lunar Corona's trajectory, a pre-buried explosive threw up the soil, blew out a strong impactful gust of wind, and set off a scarlet flame.

Being struck by this, the Scarlet Lunar Corona was redirected and landed in another direction.

Boom!

Another explosive blew up, inducing a fiery light to rise up. Klein leaped up and pounced at the Scarlet Lunar Corona which wasn't too far from him.

Suddenly, a pale palm appeared right in front of the Scarlet Lunar Corona's landing spot and grabbed it.

It was none other than Steve, who had disappeared and then reappeared!

His instincts made him chase after the full moon!

Pa! With a soft sound, Steve grabbed the Scarlet Lunar Corona. His dark green eyes, which were full of malice and desire, gained a trace of spiritual luster. This caused him to return from the form of a pure wraith to a Sequence 5 powerhouse.

He smirked at Klein.

He wasn't in a hurry to deal with this weak opponent, so he let his figure disappear once more.

Klein, who had already thrown himself out, rolled twice, reached into his pocket with his left hand, and once again gently flipped open the iron cigar case. He touched Rosago's All-Black Eye.

Amidst the ravings that caused his tears and snot to constantly flow, Klein saw more strange black lines, and from their origin, he caught a glimpse of the invisible Steve.

He was closing in on Sharron, who was slumped to the ground weakly, at high speeds. He wanted to control her, rescue Jason, and put an end to the battle.

Sharron was their main target for this operation!

Klein suddenly retracted his left hand, and with a thought, he once again injected his spirituality into the Sun Brooch.

2! 1!

A holy beam of light descended from the sky, enveloping Sharron from behind.

Steve, who was wearing a dark red cloak, suddenly appeared a few meters away, barely avoiding the holy light.

With the augmentation of the Scarlet Lunar Corona, his speed was already frightening to the point of him being capable of effectively dodging in an instant!

But at the same time, the genuflecting Klein had raised his right hand and pulled the trigger of the revolver.

His target was Jason!

A resplendent bullet flew out, aimed directly at Jason's back, and was about to "help" him enter the bronze door of mystery.

But at that moment, Steve disappeared and reappeared behind Jason, blocking the bullet with his open left palm.

Sizzle!

The sunlight from the explosion made him shake his arm in pain. He narrowed his eyes as his skin was constantly charring and peeling, but it quickly healed.

Suddenly, he heard a crisp sound!

Klein had snapped his fingers again!

Boom!

A nearby explosive exploded. The resulting shock wave and bullet-like stones shot out in all directions.

A large number of them landed on Jason's and Steve's bodies!

"No!"

With a blood-curdling scream, the clothes on Jason's side tore apart, and the quickly-darkening white spots on his skin appeared as if fresh blood was about to seep out.

To a Zombie with a body as hard as steel, this wasn't an effective injury, but to a person like Jason who was struggling to hold on, it was equivalent to the beckoning of death.

He could no longer hold on as those terrifying arms quickly pulled him into the crack of the bronze door!

"No..."

Jason's scream resounded into the distance as the mysterious and illusory door closed with a clang, devouring the rest of his screams and isolating it from the world!

The clearing in the middle of the warehouses turned completely silent. Jason had completely disappeared, as though he had never been born into this world.

Steve's eyes widened, and he opened his mouth, letting out an angry screech, "Damn it!" *Bam!*

As his voice resounded, Klein felt as if someone had heavily hammered him in the head. His vision turned blurry, and whatever he breathed in smelled of blood. His vision had become blood-red.

For a short time, his ears were filled with buzzing sounds, and he couldn't hear anything else.

After Tyre delivered the Scarlet Lunar Corona, he had grown black fur and sharp fangs. He was no longer immune to its effects and painfully covered his ears. Blood even flowed out from the corner of his eyes and mouth.

Maric, who should have seized the opportunity to grab him, was in an even worse state. His desire and malice, which had been suppressed by the sedative, had reared their heads once more, causing him to almost lose control of his zombies. His expression was extremely twisted.

Due to Wraith Steve's shriek, the weakened Miss Sharron also revealed a painful expression. However, she still managed to close her palm with much difficulty, causing the rays of light to be severed, which caused the illusory, mysterious bronze door to disappear.

Klein knew that the situation was turning bad. Enduring his headache, he quickly took a step back and entered the fire. His figure quickly disappeared and reappeared in another explosion that happened in a different direction.

He had just jumped out, in an attempt to strike back, when he saw Steve, the middle-aged man with the dark red cloak, stop in his tracks instead of chasing after him, as though he was waiting for something.

Klein suddenly felt agitated. His head felt dizzy, and his stomach spasmed.

He quickly weakened, but he had no idea why.

Maric, who had just recovered from the sharp shriek, also had an abnormal reaction. He constantly stretched out his hands to grab at himself, as if his body suffered an uncontrollable itch.

He gasped for breath as he used his long, sharp nails to rip apart his clothes and left white streaks across his body. The more he scratched, the deeper it became, causing its redness to seep out.

Sharron fell to the ground, but she couldn't stand again. Her blue eyes lost their focus, as though she couldn't see anything.

"Poison..." she whispered the word.

Not far from her, Steve looked at her tightly clenched fist. He seemed rather fearful of the bronze door that was covered with mysterious patterns and an indescribable smell. He didn't dare to recklessly make a move.

In his right hand, he held the Scarlet Lunar Corona, the crimson full moon that was releasing a cold glow. Using his left hand, he took out a brown, translucent glass bottle from his pocket, and he snorted.

“Biological Poison Bottle can be used to randomly create different kinds of toxins. As long as you open it, the poisons will gradually spread to its surroundings.

“It will be effective in less than a minute, and the symptoms will only become worse. In four minutes, if you don’t leave the poison-filled environment, then the corresponding effects will be unpreventable, such as death.

“What a pity. I thought Jason would be able to hold on to this moment.

“Sharron, you wouldn’t have been affected since a Spirit Body isn’t afraid of poison, but unfortunately, there’s the Scarlet Lunar Corona here, which prevents you from switching states.

“Perhaps, you can give up resisting and let me understand your hidden charms.”

He appeared to be leisurely introducing the abilities of the mystical item in his hand, as though he wanted to wait for Klein and company to completely lose their ability to resist before attacking.

However, Tyre didn’t understand his intention. Under the influence of the Scarlet Lunar Corona, the irrational Werewolf started his counterattack without hesitation. He threw himself forward, flailed his claws, and swiped across Maric’s body, tearing it apart.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sound of nails tearing through steel sounded in succession, and Maric’s skin finally showed signs of bloody wounds.

Klein pinched his forehead. It felt like his forehead was starting to heat up, but the negative effects weren’t as bad as what Steve mentioned.

It seems like the poison has been weakened by the Sun Brooch’s constant purification and purging effect... Klein suddenly sneered.

“Are you planning on attacking us after we succumb to the poison?

“Why do you think I didn’t use fireworks just now? Why do you think I relied on explosives?

“With so many explosions, I’ve definitely attracted the attention of others. The official Beyonders nearby are rushing here at this very moment. You don’t have much time left!”

Steve turned his head to look at Klein, whose face was couldn’t be identified thanks to the paint that was smeared on it. He suddenly laughed and said, “I forgot there’s a bug that I can easily deal with.

“Don’t worry, you’ll definitely be dead before the people from the Church arrive...”

Before he could finish his sentence, Klein suddenly raised the revolver in his right hand and shot out a purifying bullet.

Steve moved his footsteps slightly, traversing several meters in turn. Along the way, he left afterimages behind.

However, Klein’s bullet didn’t hit where he had aimed. Instead, it hit the middle of the clearing, piercing through the soil, and creating a loud commotion!

A breeze of spirituality blew past, and both Maric’s zombie and Steve’s shadows stopped moving at the same time.

In a split-second, they charged out rabidly, charging towards the center of the clearing like a pack of hungry dogs at mealtime.

Steve, who was about to use arcane methods to control Klein and easily kill him, was stunned for a moment. Then, he revealed a puzzled and surprised expression.

For some baffling reason, he discovered that he couldn’t command the undead he controlled! It was a first for him!

At the same time, Klein snapped his fingers, detonating a few more bombs and setting off scarlet flames that soared into the air in different locations.

His figure leaped from one bonfire to the other as he blinked towards the clearing’s exterior.

“You want to run!?” Steve whispered. Just as he was about to turn incorporeal to chase after his target, he found that the zombies and

shadows had dug out a square metal box and were fighting for the item inside.

Soon, one of shadow succeeded. Its body swelled, and seemingly gaining intelligence, it flew in another direction.

So that item is used to delay my actions and allow him to successfully escape... Humph, he still doesn't understand what a Wraith and the Scarlet Lunar Corona is capable of! Steve temporarily gave up on chasing Klein. Putting away the Biological Poison Bottle, his body suddenly disappeared and appeared on a thin layer of ice that formed in a puddle of water. He relied on his terrifying speed to drag out an afterimage and arrived behind that giant shadow.

Steve's eyes flashed with a dark green light. The shadow instantly dispersed without a sound, and the item in its hand dropped.

The other zombies and shadows, completely disregarding the oppressive aura of the mighty existence as they rushed over to grab it.

Steve was more and more alarmed and curious. He discovered that his spiritual intuition couldn't draw any revelations from the object that had caused the rioting of the zombies and shadows.

He stepped forward and grabbed the object with his left hand.

It was a dark gold key ring. Hanging from it was an ancient and exquisite copper whistle. Beside the copper whistle hung a simple bronze key.

They clung closely together as they remained in Steve's pale palm.

At the same time, Steve's Scarlet Lunar Corona in his right hand was quietly emanating a crimson glow, like a miniature full moon.

Before thoughts even surfaced in Steve's mind, a faint but very strange sound entered his mind, ripping at his nerves and scraping his scalp.

"Ah!"

Steve let out a miserable scream and fell from midair to the ground. The Scarlet Lunar Corona, which he held in his hand, and the key ring with the copper whistle and key were sent flying at the same time.

He struggled and twisted on the spot, his body bulging and protruding. There were arms that were as small as babies which grew out of his body, or a foul, light yellow liquid that sloshed inside his body.

At this moment, a flame ignited again. Klein, who had "escaped," leaped out and appeared in the path of the Scarlet Lunar Corona.

He didn't attempt to catch the mystical item. Instead, with a gentle flick, he diverted its trajectory, sending it flying toward the weakened Miss Sharron.

Steve's cries of pain gradually died down, and the Scarlet Lunar Corona accurately landed on Sharron.

Sharron's figure instantly turned incorporeal, and the blue eyes that had lost their focus regained their luster.

Clenching her right hand tightly, her left hand held the palmsized accessory inlaid with a ring of dark rubies. Her body began to float.

The Scarlet Lunar Corona allowed its wielder to be immune to the influence of the full moon!

Sharron was no longer weak!

And in her Spirit Body state, she wasn't afraid of the biological poison!

At this moment, the zombies and shadows gathered together once again, fighting over the chained Master Key and Azik's copper whistle.

Klein didn't care. He raised his left arm and pointed.

The Sun Brooch on his chest flashed a dark golden glow and disappeared. An intense, bright, and holy light fell from the sky, shrouding the group of zombies and shadows that were fighting over it.

In what seemed like daylight, the transparent and bizarre shadows quickly melted and disappeared. The pale and stinking corpses emitted black smoke first before they ignited and burned like candles.

By the time the light disappeared, there was almost nothing left except for Azik's ancient and intricate copper whistle and the Master Key

which were both strung on an already blackened key ring. They lay there silently.

Meanwhile, Sharron didn't care about Maric, whose injuries were turning graver thanks to Tyre's attacks. Instead, she relied on her own ability to phase into mirror-like items to reach the thin piece of ice, that Steve had previously used, and stepped out.

She stretched out her right hand towards Steve, who was transforming into a monster, and opened it wide, aiming the palm of her hand at the enemy!

Endless rays of light burst out and quickly intertwined to form the mysterious-patterned bronze door.

Creak!

With a jarring noise, the small black hat on Sharron's head was blown away by a sudden gust of wind, and her carefully combed blonde hair cascaded down in a disheveled state.

It was obvious that using the mystical item again was rather taxing on her.

Creak!

The mysterious bronze door produced a crack, and a series of shrill laughter, sobbing, and shouting echoed in the air.

Arms either filled with teeth or completely without skin reached out wildly and grabbed at Steve, whose pustules were bursting one by one.

The strange dark-green vines that accentuated an infant's face and the slippery, illusory tentacles also bound the Sequence 5 powerhouse.

"Ah!"

Steve cried out again.

The pale yellow pus, which flowed out, covered his entire body, allowing him to barely resist the pull.

A bright red crack appeared on his face, and in it was a hole leading to a dark tunnel!

At that moment, Klein raised his revolver and aimed it at him.

Without any delay or hesitation, with his face disguised, Klein calmly pulled the trigger while wearing his half top hat.

Bang! Bang!

With a flash of the Sun Brooch, two bullets filled with holiness accurately hit Steve in the head.

Although they didn't pierce his skin or bones, they ignited resplendent flames, turning Steve into a bright torch.

"Ah!"

With another scream, Steve was pulled closer to the illusory bronze door.

As Klein released the revolver's cylinder, the shells fell to the ground, and he took out the metal box containing the Beyonder bullets.

At the same time, he once again injected his spirituality into the Sun Brooch.

2! 1!

A pure and flawless pillar of light fell from the sky and instantly hit Steve's body.

Taking this breather, Klein inserted three purifying bullets and three exorcism bullets into the cylinder and snapped it shut.

He aimed at Steve's head again, and with the flash of the dark golden brooch, he pulled the trigger hard, six times in a row.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

One by one, the bullets sliced through the air—either swirling with a golden luster or emitting resplendent beams—as they hit Steve's head.

Thanks to a Clown's control over his body and his persistence in practicing his marksmanship, Klein's six bullets which were augmented with Cleave of Purification accurately hit the same spot, the same spot as the first two bullets!

They were like fists from a giant of light, repeatedly pounding at the left of Steve's face!

With a series of bangs, Steve, who had been entangled by the strange arms and the dark-green vines, failed to phase away to avoid the attack. His head was whipped to the side repeatedly as his body trembled. His cheekbones quickly caved in, breaking out into sharp white bones!

Bang!

The last bullet completely tore through, splashing the Sequence 5 powerhouse's dark red blood. This opening allowed the resplendent and golden flames to continuously drill in, burning into bursts of dark-green mist.

In the holy light, Steve's clothes were ignited. His body was quickly charred as he dripped with grease.

However, he was still alive!

Compared to Marionettist Rosago, the survivability of a Sequence 5 from the Mutant pathway was clearly much better!

However, the heavily injured Steve could no longer resist the strange tugging arms. His legs moved forward uncontrollably, almost flying towards that bronze door and into the deep crack that had opened. He was thrown into the darkness where pairs of eyes lurked.

At this moment, Sharron suddenly clenched her right hand, her forehead covered in sweat.

The illusory and subtle rays of light were abruptly severed, and the indescribably mysterious bronze door lost the source of its existence.

It swayed, and before Steve entered, it reluctantly pulled back its long arms which were either filled with teeth or blood and sealed the crack.

Creak!

The door closed, quickly becoming transparent before it disappeared!

Steve's leaning body was rigid in place, blackened, and shriveled, like a mummified corpse that had been burned for a long time.

With her right fist tightly clenched and the Scarlet Lunar Corona on her, Sharron's figure rapidly turned incorporeal. She took a step forward and overlapped with Steve.

Klein's Spirit Vision instantly lost sight of her. However, the charred Steve raised his fists and abruptly smashed them against his already severely injured head.

Bam!

His head turned into a pulp like that of a rotten tomato, and milky white spots sprayed out before splattering to the ground.

A translucent figure was also expelled. It rapidly spread out, turning into something that looked like a giant jellyfish. Within it was an dreamlike liquid that was swishing and a pair of deathly pale eyes that were condensing!

Sharron was forced out by this strange object, and she reappeared beside it.

She suddenly stretched out her left hand, letting out a silent shriek.

The ground suddenly turned black, as if it had turned into a muddy deep sea. Twisted bloody vines grew out from it, splitting into many sections, with each section having four sharp teeth and an eye.

The blood-red vine wildly grew upwards, immediately locking onto the jellyfish-like phantom as it greedily sucked the dreamlike liquid within.

The phantom quickly collapsed, and the blood-red vine once again retreated back into the muddy deep sea.

But with this delay, the headless, charred Steve began running. He tore across the clearing and headed for the way out.

He still wasn't dead despite already losing his head!

Steve had only run a few steps when a sudden crisp sound cracked in the silence.

Pa!

Klein, in a black double-breasted frock coat with a matching half top hat, turned to him and snapped his fingers.

Boom!

The dirt beneath Steve's feet was violently lifted, and scarlet flames soared.

It spread upward, and when it reached its highest point, it spilled down like beautiful fireworks.

Steve's body was torn to pieces from such fireworks. His charred hands, feet, guts, and blood splattered everywhere. One of his fingers rolled to Klein's feet, and the brown, translucent Biological Poison Bottle fell in another direction.

The mutilated body, which was the last traces of Steve's existence, squirmed a few times before finally becoming still.

In the scene with the blooming fireworks, Klein felt his spirituality become more active, and the powers that still wasn't completely his had become more attuned to him.

In response to this sensation, he passed the revolver to his left hand. He took off the silk half top hat from his head with his black-gloved right hand, and he pressed it to his chest, and bowed slightly at Sharron.

Sharron's blue eyes looked over.

She looked past Klein to the carnage of Werewolf Tyre and Maric.

Sharron's figure disappeared, and Tyre's eyes reflected her image.

Tyre stood there stiffly, his black hair standing on end.

He raised his arms with great difficulty and pressed them against his head.

Kacha!

He twisted hard, and his eyes soon saw his spine which were underneath the cover of his torn clothes.

Pa!

Tyre twisted and pulled again, pulling his head out of his torso!

Throughout the entire process, he didn't let out a single scream or a single word.

He held his head, letting the blood constantly drip down. The corpse which had lost its head was still standing straight, without toppling.

Sharron didn't immediately leave Tyre's body. She appeared to be attempting something.

Very soon, bits of dark-green light emerged from Tyre's head and body, quickly condensing onto one of his fangs as its core.

It seems like Miss Sharron has a way of accelerating the separation of a Beyonder characteristic... The prerequisite to doing so requires her to possess the target, kill the person, and have complete control of the body... Enlightened, Klein bent down and picked up the shells that had fallen to the ground, stuffing them into the metal square box, one by one.

He was afraid that the investigators, which would subsequently arrive, would find the Artisan through the uniqueness of the shells and, hence, find the woman who had purchased the Briber and Barbarian formulas from him. Then, they would lock onto Eye of Wisdom's gathering, causing his safety to be threatened.

As for the bullets, they had long been sacrificed to the corresponding deities in the holy light and flames, just like the materials in charms.

Putting the revolver away, Klein was about to take a step forward when Sharron appeared beside the Biological Poison Bottle with an exaggerated speed. She made it float up and land on her palm.

Before Klein could think of anything else, the pale woman flicked her wrist and threw him a translucent brown bottle and a dark-green fang.

...To save time, she's helping me pick up my spoils? Klein was startled. He instinctively pulled out a piece of paper and covered the two items. He didn't come into direct contact with them!

At this moment, he could see that Sharron's complicated black regal dress had lost its usual tidiness and cleanliness. It fluttered gently in the wind, and a few strands of her light blonde hair were stuck to the side of her face, making her feel more like a person.

Hmm... This Biological Poison Bottle comes with its own lid... I just wonder what negative side effects it has... Klein lowered his head and examined his spoils of war. He used the black cap hanging on the side to reseal the Biological Poison Bottle so that it wouldn't continue to do him harm.

As for the dark-green fang, it was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Werewolf Tyre.

As Klein placed the two items into a small metal box he prepared, and he used Holy Night Powder to create a wall of spirituality, blocking off the influence they had on their surroundings. He watched Sharron's figure disappear from the corner of his eyes. Steve's remnant flesh squirmed and produced a nearly translucent point of light.

Similarly, he was still on guard against Maric, lest he suddenly went crazy.

Amidst this vigilance, he discovered that the healing powers of a

Zombie was truly astonishing. The bone-deep wounds from a moment ago had now basically closed!

Maric also gave him a profound look. It was as though he had remembered something and understood something.

When he was done, Klein walked a dozen steps away, picking up the square metal box that had been dug up by the zombies and shadows. Then, he found Azik's copper whistle and the Master Key which were surrounded by human-shaped "candles."

He glanced at it and awkwardly realized that he didn't dare to pick them up.

The effects of the Scarlet Lunar Corona were still radiating through the clearing!

This was the last trap he had set up, one that would never be used unless all other means were exhausted. For this, he had taken the time to visit a hospital's morgue and test out what the corpses would do after they had gotten their hands on Azik's copper whistle. It allowed him to design a corresponding plan.

"Ahem. Can you stop the influence of the Scarlet Lunar Corona?" Klein turned to look at Sharron who had materialized again.

She already had an additional translucent doll in her hand.

Without saying a word, Sharron placed the Scarlet Lunar Corona to her chest with her other hand.

The circle of rubies quickly dimmed, and the light from the full moon disappeared from the abandoned land.

Only then did Klein lean over and grab the keyring with his fingertip, raising up Azik's copper whistle and the Master Key. Then, he stored them in the square iron box with concave bullet marks and quickly created a seal.

Meanwhile, Maric circled around and dealt with the scene.

Sharron pulled up her small black bonnet, and her figure disappeared before reappearing in front of Klein.

"The Book of Secrets is in your room," Sharron said calmly.

That is to say, no matter what the end result is, as long as I can make it back alive, I will be able to get a portion of the reward. I wouldn't have gone through all this trouble for nothing... Klein smiled and bowed.

"Thank you for your generosity.

"The official Beyonders will arrive any time soon. We have to leave."

Sharron nodded and asked, "Do you need any help?"

"There's no need." Klein chuckled. "I still have lots of fireworks which I haven't released."

As soon as he finished his sentence, he raised his hand and snapped his fingers.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The remaining explosives exploded, one by one, sending flames up into the sky.

They clustered around the largest and most eye-catching one in the center, producing a dreamy and beautiful scene.

Sharron's gaze was instinctively attracted to it for a second, and when she looked back, Klein was no longer there. There was only a spark that gradually dissipated.

Away from the clearing, he took a small detour northwest, preventing him from running into any official Beyonders on the way. One match after another was lit on the road, and the flames quickly soared up and then quickly disappeared.

Klein's figure constantly emerged from within them as he leaped across the flames and departed the West Balam dock.

Immediately following that, he took out a special bottle of extract and wiped it over his face. With a gentle wipe using a piece of paper, he removed all the paint.

Pa!

Klein shook his wrist and burned the paper to ashes.

Then, he picked up the cane he had hidden nearby, straightened his clothes, and walked out into the street like an ordinary person.

Not long after, Klein arrived at a cathedral. Its name was: "Lever Cathedral."

As many devotees weren't rich, they might not be able to rest on Sundays and were usually busy during the day. Thus, the cathedrals of the various Churches typically opened until the early hours of the morning, giving most believers the opportunity to pray and repent.

Klein looked up, tapped the steps with the black cane in his hand, and stepped inside.

He intended to avoid the subsequent round of inspections of the surroundings people.

...

A few minutes later, a Machinery Hivemind team appeared at the clearing surrounded by abandoned warehouses.

There were a total of five of them, each armed with different kinds of Beyonder weapons. However, all of them frowned when they saw the cleaned up scene.

After looking for a moment, they began putting in effort to gather clues.

...

Lever Cathedral.

Since it wasn't even 11 yet, there were quite a few people here. However, not a single person spoke. The entire prayer hall was so peaceful and holy that no one wanted to break the silence.

Klein sat in the third pew along the aisle. He leaned his black cane forward and took off his silk half top hat.

Wearing a black double-breasted frock coat, he clasped his hands against his lower jaw and closed his eyes. His expression was abnormally calm as he faced the triangle-shaped Sacred Emblem in front of him.

After a full half hour of uninterrupted silence, Klein opened his eyes and slowly rose to his feet.

He took his cane, put on his hat, and left the cathedral, taking a rental carriage back to Minsk Street in the dark.

At this moment, the vigilance and surveillance of the surrounding area had inevitably relaxed, turning into the shadows under the light of the gas lamps.

Shortly after midnight, Klein took out his key, opened the door to his house, and entered the empty guest rooms to search for the Book of Secrets.

It didn't take him much effort to find the old book, bound in thick goatskin, in the wardrobe in a room on the first floor.

The hardcover of the book was dark black, with two lines of Hermes written in crimson:

"Book of Secrets.

"Klarman."

Phew... Klein exhaled but was in no rush to read the book. Instead, he quickly constructed a wall of spirituality in the room, summoning and responding to himself via a ritual, and then he threw Azik's copper whistle, the Master Key, the All-Black Eye, the Beyonder bullets, the bottle of biological poison, the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic, the Book of Secrets, and even all the vessels above the gray fog. He planned on waiting for the commotion to subside before deciding on which to take out and which to carry.

After doing all this, he didn't even bother to study the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic or the bottle of biological poison. He simply washed up and laid in bed.

There were two reasons for doing so. Firstly, reading the book was too time consuming. It was very easy to bring trouble to his body in the real world on this rather uncalm night. Secondly, Klein was aware of his current weakness, which was that the speed at which his spirituality

was growing wasn't enough to satisfy his ever-increasing Beyonder powers and mystical items.

After such an intense battle, his spirituality was already drained. His head was aching, and he was drowsy.

Yes, the one thing that places the greatest burden on my spirituality are the Paper Figurine Substitutes, followed by the creation of "Sun Holy Water" with the Sun Brooch, but it wasn't used tonight. Next in the list is Holy Water Creation and Flaming Jump... Klein yawned and used Cogitation to get rid of the state of extreme tiredness and tenseness that prevented him from falling asleep.

In less than ten seconds, he entered the land of dreams as various fragmented scenes appeared alternately before him.

...

In the clearing surrounded by the abandoned warehouses, the Machinery Hivemind came and went before coming again. The person in charge of investigating this incident went from being a team captain to an expert at the rank of deacon.

Ikanser Bernard's brown hair remained unkempt and stuck out stubbornly, making it impossible to hide them even with a hat on.

This led to many members of the Machinery Hivemind to secretly joke that the deacon probably used a bomb to style his hair.

At this moment, Ikanser, with his cut jaw and facial features, was holding a silver mirror with ancient patterns on it.

On each side of the mirror was an eye-like ornament. They were built on the foundation of a black gem which looked serene and charming.

Ikanser surveyed the area and said, "Although the rats in the sewers are experts at interfering with divination and mediumship and had already dealt with the scene effectively, this is a mysterious Beyonder world, and there is no way to guarantee a one hundred percent success."

As he spoke, he looked at the silver mirror in his hand as he used his right hand to touch its surface thrice.

After pausing for two seconds, Ikanser took a deep breath and said in a deep voice, “Honorable Arrodes, my question is ‘Who were the participants in the incident that just happened here?’”

The surrounding darkness suddenly thickened, and the surface of the silver mirror began to ripple with aqueous light.

Soon, a scene appeared in the silver mirror.

Amidst the rising flames, there was a figure floating in the air. He was wearing a black double-breasted frock coat and a half top hat. His body was distorted, and his face was indistinct. Furthermore, his face was smeared with paint.

Beneath his feet, flames rose up and engulfed him.

As the aqueous light flashed, the scene changed. A middle-aged man in a dark red cloak appeared. His arm was burning with resplendent flames, but his head was hidden in the darkness.

Scene after scene was played out in front of their eyes. They saw a woman with a complicated black regal dress and messy blonde hair. However, her face was completely transparent, as if she didn’t exist.

Beside this lady were two men with black fur all over their bodies. Only their backs could be seen as they were being pulled by strange arms.

Finally, the changes came to an end as it fixed onto the blazing flames that soared into the sky. The “fireworks” bloomed in a splendid and resplendent fashion as they lit up the entire scene.

In this dreamlike scene, the man in the black double-breasted frock coat appeared once again.

Twisting and retracting, he faced forward, pressed his hat to his chest, and bowed slightly.

Not only was his face extremely blurry after being interfered with, but it also presented a glisten of oil.

Just as Ikanser was about to ask his teammates for their opinions, several lines of text in ancient Feysac appeared on the surface of the mirror.

“Based on the principle of reciprocity, it’s my turn to ask the question.

“If you answer wrong or lie, you will be punished.”

The word “punished” was blood-red, as if it were dripping with liquid!

The expression on Ikanser’s face was twisted at first before it turned abnormally serious.

Soon after, the mirror’s aqueous light flashed and a new line of text appeared.

“What’s your sexual orientation?”

Ikanser was stunned as he felt the gazes of his surrounding team members all land on him.

...

Six in the morning. The sky was just beginning to brighten.

The sleeping Klein awoke to the punctual church bells.

According to his usual habits, he would just turn around and continue sleeping until it was almost 8 o’clock. But this time, he immediately sat up and looked around.

“Yeah, I didn’t get raided on the pretext of checking my gas meter...” He let out a sigh of relief, and without even bothering to clean himself, he got off the bed and took four steps counterclockwise to go above the gray fog.

He wanted to study his spoils from last night!

Sitting in The Fool’s seat, Klein started from the simplest.

He picked up the dark-green fang and observed it for a few seconds. Then, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination sentence: “Its effects.”

This didn’t mean that divination could be used as a substitute for experimentation. With the fact that he held the item in his possession, and how he knew a lot about Prisoner, Lunatic, and Werewolf from Sharron and Maric, he believed that it was enough for him to attempt to gain some revelations from it.

After reciting the statement, he quickly entered the dreamland and witnessed one scene after another.

A vicious wound appeared on Werewolf Tyre's stomach, and his intestines flowed out as they were dragged across the ground. However, he only washed it with water and stuffed the intestines back into his stomach. He pinched both sides of the wound, and in the end, the wound actually healed...

Under the perfect red moon, he faced the sky and let out a long howl. Black fur grew out of his body, inch by inch, and the fangs in his mouth were distinct...

He waved his claws and cracked the steel plate that wasn't considered thin...

He ran wildly through the wilderness, increasing the gap between him and the group of pursuing gray wolves as he ran further and further away...

He made the attendants, whose eyes were glazed but cold, charge at their enemies without fear of death...

He also used a variety of weapons to kill people, including bombs, and he became stronger as he lost his reasoning while in his enraged state...

...

Opening his eyes, Klein roughly understood the characteristics of a Werewolf and grasped the hidden dangers of this Beyonder characteristic.

Werewolf Tyre had been under the full moon's illumination, allowing him to be unrestrained towards his desires. After his death, he left a relatively strong spiritual mark, so those Beyonders, who would use this Beyonder characteristic to concoct a potion to advance themselves to the next Sequence, had to resist this kind of effect at an early stage; otherwise, they would show signs of losing control.

However, the negative effects had yet to reach the level of a Sealed Artifact, and the Beyonder characteristic left behind by the Werewolf could still be used as the main ingredient for a potion.

That's good... Unfortunately, Zombie Jason's Beyonder characteristic has been swallowed by that strange door... I wonder where it leads to and if there's a way to get it back... Klein put down the dark-green fang, feeling both regret and sadness for his loss, before picking up the bottom of brown translucent biological poison.

He repeated the same procedure and performed a dream divination, but this time he didn't have the confidence to gain a detailed revelation. Therefore, he changed the divination statement to: "Its positive and negative effects."

In the gray gloom of the dream world, Klein once again saw tragic scenes.

Someone fell to the ground, scratching himself and ripping off his skin, flesh, and even bones...

Another person held his head, his eyes losing focus while his auras weakened...

One kept vomiting. Towards the end, the person who died was convulsing...

Someone burst out laughing, laughing so hard that he couldn't even breathe...

Some people stopped fighting and looked at each other. Then, they hugged and kissed each other...

When the scene reached the end, the translucent brown bottle was placed into a cup with water. The transparent liquid inside gradually turned amber in color and was drunk... The person holding onto the bottle of biological poison was weakened at first before coughing. Then, he touched his forehead. He found himself scalding as his condition turned for the worse...

The dream quickly ended. Klein tapped his finger on the edge of the long table as he attempted to interpret the revelation with great difficulty.

According to Steve, the earlier revelations mean that after the biological poison's bottle lid is removed, it would keep emanating its poison. As for which poison the opponents gets inflicted by, it's

completely random, and even the wielder is unable to control it? The poison inside is really quite abominable...

The effective range of the poison cannot be deciphered via a revelation... Hmm, soaking it in water and drinking the amber liquid in advance would prevent one from getting poisoned? But how many minutes should the soaking take? Even if the person holding the Biological Poison Bottle doesn't open the lid, their bodies would get worse as they slowly get infected, and the ailments become serious? Uh, what's the exact cut-off time?

Klein rubbed his forehead, intending to do some experiments above the gray fog when he was free, but he didn't know if the Biological Poison Bottle was effective in there.

For example, in his current Spirit Body state, he wasn't afraid of being poisoned at all.

I'll leave it at this. I'll study it in detail in the future... Klein turned his attention to the Book of Secrets, which was bound in goatskin. He then casually flipped to the first page.

It was a title page with simple patterns on it but with nothing written on it...

Flipping another page, Klein finally saw the opening line of the Book of Secrets: "We worship the moon, not the Evernight Goddess."

Another statement about only worshiping the moon and not the Goddess? Klein couldn't help but have a look of contemplation.

The last time he heard about such matters was when he was learning about the Life School of Thought. He never expected that the Shaman King, who had lived his entire life in the Southern Continent, would also have a similar point of view.

—In the Pale Era, at the end of the Fourth Epoch, the Berserk Sea became a veritable reality. Thus, the Northern and Southern Continent were cut off from each other, and the Life School of Thought was formed in the early Fifth Epoch. Obviously, it was impossible for the Life School of Thought to extend itself to the Southern Continent before Roselle sent his men to find a safe sea route.

Shaman King Klarman was a historical figure who was active in an era more than a thousand years before the Northern Continent's invasion.

In other words, the two Beyonder factions, which were in different continents, had no way of communicating with each other and had chosen to worship the moon itself and ignore the Evernight Goddess at almost the same period of time.

Such a coincidence inadvertently made one consider why.

Could it be that the birth of a new god had taken away a portion of the authority related to the moon? But, as a deity, "He" shouldn't be so obscure and unknown... In other words, although the Goddess had snatched the authority of the Moon, the followers of the primordial Moon God had survived. They had been passed down from the Fourth Epoch or even the Third Epoch. Even after the separation of the Northern Continent and Southern Continent, they blossomed into two groups, one helmed by the Shaman King, the other by the Life School of Thought? Klein made a rough guess, but he was troubled by the lack of clues to narrow the scope.

He gave up thinking about it for the time being and quickly skimmed through the rest of the contents of the Book of Secrets.

In the preamble, Shaman King Klarman said, very directly, that many of the rituals, deeds, astromancy, and summoning techniques in the book had originated from a primitive worship of the moon and described the corresponding honorific names in detail: "The one and only red moon, the symbol of life and beauty, the mother of all spiritual forces."

There's actually an honorific name! However, it lacks the more popular descriptions like those of the Evernight Goddess or Earth Mother... If there really is such a hidden god, His followers would inevitably develop a simpler title to address "Him" that's more suitable for praise than the worship of the Primordial Moon... Klein sensed something amiss as he began to analyze it with his own knowledge on mysticism.

Besides, using the Lady of Crimson to hold a ritual would very obviously direct it at the Goddess. But using an honorific name which is very similar but more detailed would circumvent the Goddess, pointing it to the source of their power—the Primordial Moon... I wonder what arcane existence it is... Klein thought with wonder and alarm.

Due to his lack of time, he skimmed through the details and found that, as Shaman King Klarman had said so himself, many of the deeds and rituals were directed at the moon.

For Klein, it wasn't a cause for concern. He didn't plan on copying them wholesale and end up provoking the Primordial Moon which he had no idea about. What he wanted to learn was the overall structure, design, and details of the deeds and rituals.

Only by mastering the underlying rules could he come up with his own secret deeds, rituals, astromancy, and summoning techniques that pointed to the King of Yellow and Black.

Perhaps in the far future, I'll have my own mysticism system... Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his wrist and finally confirmed the authenticity of the Book of Secrets.

After receiving a clear answer, he was in no hurry to use the Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic to divine a formula. After all, he

wasn't able to sell it, and for the same reason, he decided to delay the research of the Biological Poison Bottle for a while.

He quickly returned to the real world and drew the curtains. He saw the sun, which wasn't capable of illuminating the land. It was hidden behind the clouds and fog, looking somewhat pale.

"Achoo!"

Suddenly, Klein covered his nose and mouth, and he sneezed.

Only then did he realize that his head was aching and burning. He felt light-headed and had seemingly caught a cold.

I actually fell ill as a Sequence 7 Beyonder... Klein pulled out a piece of paper and sniffed.

He carefully thought back for a moment and quickly understood the reason.

The negative effects of the Biological Poison Bottle would gradually weaken the possessor and result in an illness!

If it was carried around even longer, then it might even lead to death.

And this effect couldn't be eliminated with the use of spirituality seals!

Last night, Klein's spirituality was almost nearly emptied after the battle. While his body was still weak from the poison, he still carried the Biological Poison Bottle with him and hid in Lever Cathedral for half an hour...

Adding the time spent on his return to Minsk Street, and he had embarrassingly fallen ill.

Thankfully, it's not serious... It doesn't affect anything... Klein sneezed again as he prepared to soak himself in a hot bath.

After washing his face and rinsing his mouth, he specially fried an egg to reward himself. The fragrance was truly tantalizing.

A Shaman King's Book of Secrets and the Biological Poison Bottle, a mystical item that's not worse than the Sun Brooch, as well as a Sequence 7 Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic. I made quite a killing this time... It's just a pity that I didn't manage to obtain the Zombie

Beyonder characteristic... Klein sat by the side of the dining table. As he ate, he did a tally of his spoils.

What made his heart ache was the fact that he had used a total of eleven Beyonder bullets, each worth nearly ten pounds!

That is to say, I burned a hundred pounds... It's really like throwing money to deal damage... It's no wonder most Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders are so desperate for money... Klein glanced down at his breakfast.

They added up to only a few pence!

After breakfast, Klein idly read the newspapers, sneezing from time to time as he wiped his nose and mouth with a piece of tissue paper.

As soon as the church bell stopped chiming at eight o'clock, his doorbell rang.

Klein wasn't surprised to see the reporter for the Daily Observer, Mike Joseph.

The reporter with beautiful blue eyes and a thin mustache, but with rather rough skin, took off his hat and greeted him. Then he went straight to the point.

"Detective Moriarty, do you have time to take the job?"

Although he had a cold, he still needed to take on jobs like usual to avoid suspicion from anyone during this period of time... Klein, who had just finished a job, smiled and said, "I'm slightly ill, but that doesn't affect my fighting or shooting skills."

Mike suddenly smiled and said, "Thank you for your help.

"Let's set off now.

"Eh, Detective Moriarty, have you had breakfast? I'll treat you. As your employer, I should be in charge of providing you your meals today."

Inviting me to breakfast? Klein was startled.

"I just finished eating.

“But I suggest you go to East Borough to have breakfast there. That way, you can see a lot of things. I’ll just need a cup of coffee when we’re there.”

“...No problem.” Mike pointed outside. “The carriage I hired is waiting.”

Klein sized him up and said, “Sir, you’d better change into something a little worse; otherwise, there will be lots of work for me.”

Mike looked down at his tweed coat and said with some

realization, “This is too eye-catching?”

“It is in East Borough.” Klein pointed into his place. “I have some specially prepared clothes. Hmm, we are about the same size.” Mike couldn’t help but exclaim, “You really are a professional.”

Professional criminal? Klein lampooned.

After changing into ordinary worker’s clothes, the two boarded the carriage and headed for the outskirts of East Borough.

...

“Achoo!”

Klein pulled out another piece of tissue paper, wiped his mouth and nose, and blew his nose.

Since there was no trash can nearby, he folded the tissue paper properly and stuffed it back into his pocket.

“The food in this coffee shop is okay. Of course, this is relative to the residents of East Borough.” Klein pointed to the slightly greasy coffee shop at the corner of the street.

He occasionally came here for breakfast whenever he spent the night at his one-bedroom apartment that was nearby.

“Looks like it’s a pretty good restaurant.” Mike didn’t think it was a coffee shop.

It was already past nine o'clock, and there were very few customers in the coffee shop. East Borough residents typically finished their breakfast at around seven and began to work or to look for work.

After accompanying Mike as he ordered stewed beef with potatoes, bread, and coffee, Klein looked around for a window seat.

At that moment, he saw an acquaintance—the elderly man he had helped while pretending to be a journalist.

He was the one who brought me here in the first place... Why is he only having breakfast now... As Klein thought, he turned to Mike and said, "You have an interviewee."

As he spoke, he carried his coffee cup to the "tramp."

The man was wearing the same thick jacket as before. His grizzled hair was oily, and his beard was obvious. However, he no longer looked tired, and his face was no longer as appallingly pale as before.

"Good morning, we meet again." Klein sat down across him and greeted him, noticing that his breakfast was black bread with a large cup of cheap tea that was worth a penny.

The elderly man raised his head, took a close look, and said in pleasant surprise, "Mr. Reporter, it's you?"

... Klein laughed dryly, pointed at Mike and said, "This is my colleague, he wants to do a deeper investigation on my previous interview."

Being an experienced and knowledgeable reporter, Mike didn't say anything further when he heard that. All he did was nod with a smile and greeted the elderly man.

As for the matter of Detective Moriarty pretending to be a reporter, it wasn't like he had only found out about it today. He was the one who had lent him his fake reporter's identification! "So you really are a reporter!" The elderly man blurted out in astonishment. "But that doesn't stop you from being a kindhearted person."

Klein smiled and asked, "How have you been recently?"

The elderly man drank a mouthful of tea and said, “Thanks to your help, I finally had a good night’s sleep and ate my fill, so I wasn’t that weak.

“My original plan was to go back to my original job—making shoes, but they didn’t want me. They said my hands shook...” He lowered his head and chuckled, skipping that episode.

“Later, I went down to the docks and found some work. It was tiring, but at least I made money. I’ve already rented a spot in someone’s house for only six and a half pence a week. Of course, I can only sleep there at night.

“Well, that’s how working at the dock is like. I went early today and ate nothing. I raised my hand and shouted my name and the supervisor’s name, but I wasn’t chosen, so I had to come back here.

“Fortunately, there’s still a chance in the afternoon. Those people in the morning might be busy till late and won’t be fighting against us for those jobs.”

Klein listened quietly, occasionally taking a sip of the bad coffee. As for Mike, he took out a pen and paper and quickly made notes.

Finally, the elderly man, with gray hair by his temples, took a sip of tea and sighed with a smile.

“In truth, this is already much better than my previous situation, and it’s much better than many of the people here. For

instance...”

He pointed out the window to the tramps huddled in a corner.

Klein and Mike looked over and saw a group of cowering tramps lying on the ground in a filthy place that provided shelter from the wind. They were of all sexes and ages.

It was possible for them to never wake up again in the coldness of late autumn.

It was then that Klein noticed an old woman in her sixties standing by the street. Her dress was old and worn, but she was relatively neat, and her hair was neatly trimmed.

The white-haired old lady had the usual tired look of a tramp, but she still persisted in not squeezing together with the group. Instead, she slowly walked by the roadside, occasionally gazing into the coffee shop numbly.

“She’s also a pitiful person.” The former tramp who had eaten the leftover black bread also noticed the old lady and sighed, “She was said to have led quite a good life in the past. Her husband was a grain merchant and had a very spirited child, but unfortunately, he went bankrupt and her husband and child died not long after. She’s different from us, really, and you can tell at a glance... Sigh, she won’t be able to hold on much longer, unless she’s lucky to be admitted into the workhouse every time.”

As he listened, Mike’s expression changed from quiet to somber. He slowly let out a sigh and said, “I want to interview her. Can you invite her for me? She can eat and drink whatever she wants here.”

The man wasn't surprised by this request. He merely looked at Klein and Mike separately, as if to say: "the both of you are indeed colleagues."

"Yes, I'm sure she would like that." He drank his tea, got up, and walked out of the greasy coffee shop.

Not long after, the elderly woman in her old but tidy dress followed him in. Her pale face slightly lightened thanks to the warmth of the coffee shop.

She continued to tremble, as if she wanted to release the coldness in her body, bit by bit, and absorb the relatively high temperature within the coffee shop. Even after she sat down on the chair, it still took her a full minute before she could truly warm up.

"You can order whatever you want. This is the reward for accepting this interview," Klein spoke on Mike's behalf.

After Mike nodded, the old lady modestly ordered toast, lowquality cream, and coffee. Then she smiled and said, "I heard that one cannot eat greasy food after not having eaten in a while."

Very polite, very self-restrained, not like a tramp at all... Klein sighed silently.

Before the food arrived, Mike asked casually, "Can you talk about how you became a tramp?"

The old lady revealed a look of reminiscence and said with a bitter smile, "My husband was a grain merchant who mainly bought all kinds of grain from domestic farmers, but we rapidly went bankrupt ever since the Grain Act was repealed.

"He wasn't very young to begin with. After suffering that setback, his body quickly collapsed. Not long after, he passed away.

"My child, a brilliant young man, had been learning the ropes of doing business from his father. He couldn't suffer the blow, and he ended up jumping into the Tussock River on a moonless night.

“His first suicide didn’t work. He was sent to the magistrate’s court, and the police and judges were very impatient, feeling that he was wasting their time.

“If you want to commit suicide, please do so quietly and successfully. Don’t trouble us... Yes, that was probably what they wanted to say, but they found it too direct.

“My child was put in prison. Not long after, he committed suicide for the second time and succeeded.”

The old lady spoke very calmly, as though it wasn’t something that had happened to her.

But for some reason, Klein felt a deep sense of sorrow.

Nothing is more lamentable than a dead heart... He suddenly recalled the saying he had heard in his previous life.

In this world, suicide was not only prohibited by the Churches, but it was a punishable crime.

As for the reason, Klein knew very well why. First of all, many suicides were committed by jumping into a river, and without being discovered in time, there was a certain probability of them turning into a water ghost. Second, the suicider often had very abnormal emotions. Thus, under such states, ending their lives was equivalent to a sacrificial offering which could resonate with particular strange and terrifying existences.

Thus, their corpses and certain objects that were around after them after their deaths would carry strange curses that harmed others.

This was probably where the Misfortune Cloth Puppet behind Tingen City’s Chanis Gate came from.

Therefore, the seven Orthodox Churches forbade their believers from committing suicide through their own doctrine, and the royal family also promoted the corresponding legislation.

Of course, this seemed ridiculous to Klein. How could a suicider be afraid of punishment by the law?

While Mike was taking notes, he was about to say something when the owner of the coffee shop brought the food over.

“Fill your stomach first, we’ll talk later.” Mike pointed to the toast.

“Alright.” The old lady ate the food in small bites, appearing very cultured.

Having not ordered much, she quickly finished her meal.

After reluctantly drinking the last mouthful of coffee, she rubbed her temples and pleaded, “Can I get some sleep first? It’s too cold outside.”

“No problem,” Mike answered without hesitation.

The old lady thanked him gratefully a few times before she sat down on the chair and curled up into a ball as she fell asleep.

Mike looked at the man beside him and said, “You seem to be very familiar with this place. I wish to hire you as our guide. How’s three soli for the day? I’m sorry, I forgot to ask for your name.”

The man quickly shook his head and said, “No, no, that is too much. I only earn one soli a day most of the time at the dock.

“Just call me Old Kohler.

“Then, two soli a day. You deserve it,” Mike decided firmly.

After witnessing this strange bargaining, Klein blew into a piece of tissue and was about to drink another cup of coffee, when he suddenly sensed that something was wrong. He turned to look at the old lady who was curled up, asleep on the chair.

Her face, which had turned ruddy due to the coffee, was pale again. The colors of her aura and moods had vanished.

“...” Klein stood up and subconsciously extended his hand to check the old lady’s breathing.

As Mike and Kohler looked at him in surprise, he said heavily, “She’s dead.”

Mike opened his mouth, but no words came out. Kohler tapped his chest thrice and said with a bitter smile, “I knew she wouldn’t be able to hold on for long...

“Such things happen every day in East Borough.

“At least she filled her stomach and died in a warm place. I hope — heh heh, I hope it will be the same for me in the future.”

Klein was silent for a moment before he said, “Kohler, go and get the police.”

“Alright.” Kohler tapped his chest thrice once more and ran out of the coffee shop.

The boss glanced over but didn’t come over. It was as though it wasn’t something he needed to concern himself with.

After a while, a policeman in a black-and-white checkered uniform, carrying a baton and revolver, entered the coffee shop.

He looked at the dead old lady, asked Mike and Klein a few questions, then he waved his hand and said, “That’s all there is to this. The three of you can leave after I get someone to collect the corpse.”

“That’s it?” Mike blurted out in surprise.

He was obviously not very familiar with East Borough.

The policeman sneered.

“Such incidents happen in large numbers every day in East Borough!”

He rolled his eyes and looked at Klein and Mike.

“You don’t look like people from around here. Who are you? What’s your identity?”

Mike produced his press identification, and Klein said that he was a private detective responsible for protecting him.

The policeman’s face turned serious as he looked at Klein and said, “I suspect that you’re carrying a gun illegally!

“I want to search your belongings. Please cooperate with me; otherwise, it will be considered a case of resisting arrest!”

Mike was suddenly worried because he knew that private detectives were usually unlawfully possessing firearms.

Klein expressionlessly spread out his hands.

“Alright.”

He let the policeman search him, but nothing was found on him.

After the old lady’s corpse was taken away, the disappointed policeman left. Mike clenched his fist and pounded on the table.

“A living person just died here; yet, all he cares about is investigating the unlawful possession of firearms!?”

Upon saying this, Mike looked at Klein and asked, puzzled, “You didn’t bring a gun?”

Klein shook his head, pulled out his holster and revolver from under the table, and said calmly, “As a detective, I have a lot of experience in this area.”

As a Magician, he could place the revolver right in front of someone and make it impossible for the person to notice it.

Moreover, since he didn’t buy any ordinary bullets, the Beyonder bullets were temporarily left above the gray fog. His revolver was currently empty, but this didn’t stop him from shooting with his revolver. All he needed to do was to use his mouth to emulate a “bang” when he pulled the trigger.

Upon seeing this, Old Kohler whispered from the side, “So you’re a detective.”

Klein pointed at Mike and casually explained, “I was also entrusted with a mission by this gentleman the last time as well.”

Mike sat there without refuting. After a moment of silence, he said, “Although I’ve investigated the gangs and witnessed the miserable life of some prostitutes, I’m not familiar with the situation in East Borough. Please help me open my eyes to this place, allowing me to see if there are any problems with this investigation plan.”

As he spoke, he took a few sheets of paper from the inside pocket of his clothes and spread them out on the coffee shop table.

Klein glanced at him.

“Interviews with East Borough residents of different ages?

“That’s too troublesome, I think we can divide it according to location. In better apartments, five or six people squeeze into a one-room apartment. Others stay in the corner of a street that’s sheltered from the wind, park benches, bars, and workhouses.

“In addition, they can be segregated by what time they begin work, and when their rest times are.” Mike listened carefully and nodded.

“Not a bad idea. What do you think, Kohler?”

Old Kohler pinched his nose and said, “I can’t read... but I think whatever Mr. Detective said seems alright.”

Mike thought about it, changed his plan, and said, “Then let’s go to a nearby apartment and make a random selection.”

Backlund's East Borough, at an intersection.

Mike Joseph saw a number of pitiful-looking children in rags along the street. He wiped his mouth with a handkerchief and planned to head over to give them some pennies.

However, his action was stopped by the former tramp, Old Kohler.

"They're thieves!"

"Thieves? What about their parents? Or are they controlled by the gangs?" As a senior journalist, Mike had never been to the East Borough, but he had heard of instances of a few gangs controlling street children to steal and beg.

"Parents? They either don't have parents, or their parents were once thieves or might still be thieves. Of course, Mr. Reporter, you're right, many of them are under the control of gangs, and it's said that the gangs will teach them how to steal. For example, they will hang a gentleman's coat on a wall, put a handkerchief in the pocket, and hang a pocket watch on the outside, and through repeated practice, the children will attempt to steal the handkerchief without shaking the pocket watch. Heh, this is what I heard from others while at the workhouse when I was homeless." Old Kohler babbled on, "I remember the youngest thief ever caught on this street was only six years old.

Sigh, six years old..."

He seemed to recall his child who was lost to a disease and couldn't help but take out a cigarette from his pocket. He couldn't bring himself to smoke it, so all he did was take a sniff.

"Six years old..." Mike was stunned by this number.

Klein quietly listened and sighed.

"This is East Borough."

He looked around, composed himself, and said, "This place is closer to the jungle than to human society.

“Our interview has to be treated as an adventure. You have to learn how to avoid the territory of dangerous creatures, but you must also avoid those little things that don’t seem to be too harmful to you. Well, I’m talking about mosquitoes in the jungle.

“Mike, if you expose the thickness of your wallet to those kids, then even if you protect it well and don’t let them steal it, robbery is a destined outcome during the rest of the adventure. If you dare to resist, then perhaps there will be one more body floating in the Tussock River tomorrow morning.”

“Mr. Detective, you’re absolutely right! There are so many people in East Borough. No one pays notice to the few missing people every day,” Old Kohler agreed.

Mike listened intently for a few seconds, and after a few seconds of silence, he suddenly said, “1.35 million.”

“Huh?” Because of his cold, Klein’s throat was obviously a little hoarse.

Mike stepped forward and said, “This is a preliminary estimate of the population count of East Borough.

“But I know that there’s definitely more than that.” “That many?” Old Kohler was startled.

Although he had experienced the days and nights in East Borough and knew that there were a lot of residents here, he didn’t expect there to be this many.

This is several times the population of Tingen City... Klein subconsciously compared it with the place that was most familiar to him.

He looked at the intersection a few steps away and asked, “Which way should we go next?”

Old Kohler looked up and said, “Definitely not straight. That area is under the control of the Zmanger gang. They’re very vicious and completely unreasonable. If they discover any reporters doing interviews, then they’ll definitely beat us up!”

The Zmanger gang? Isn't that the "brainless" gang that caused me to lose 10,000 pounds? He was some kind of executioner. Hmm, I don't even remember his name... Fortunately, the 10,000 pounds was eventually exchanged for the Seer's corresponding Sequence 7,

6, and 5 potion formulas and the All-Black Eye, as well as the Intis Ambassador's life... I wonder who ended up obtaining the manuscript of the third-generation difference engine... Klein instantly recalled what had happened early last month. "Zmanger gang? The gang that is mainly composed of highlanders?" Mike asked thoughtfully.

"Mr. Reporter, have you heard of them?" Old Kohler asked in surprise.

Mike sneered.

"They're involved in a lot of cases, and they have some reputation outside East Borough as well. It's said that one of the members was involved in a case of Intis espionage."

...The person next to you was the person in question, the person who made the report, and also the victim... Klein silently added.

"If you gentlemen know about the Zmanger gang, then why doesn't the police arrest them?" Old Kohler asked from his viewpoint, of someone at the bottom of society.

Mike's expression suddenly turned a little awkward, and he coughed twice.

"We can only capture those who have committed crimes. There is no evidence for the rest, so we can't arrest them. Moreover, East Borough is so broad, and there are so many people. It would be hard to find anyone who is bent on hiding." As he spoke, he sighed.

"It's easy to destroy one Zmanger gang, but as long as a highlander comes to Backlund, and if they keep up their strong tradition of being combative while failing to find any other means of earning a living, it's only a matter of time before a new Zmanger gang appears."

This is a complex social issue... Klein pointed to the left and right.

"Pick one."

Old Kohler looked at the right side of the street.

“That’s where the Proscrito gang is active. As long as we don’t provoke the girls who do business on the streets or in the bars, they won’t notice us. Heh heh, it’s still morning, so there shouldn’t be any problems. They’re still sleeping.”

The word “Proscrito” meant “outlaw” in the Loen language, so it could be said that the gang who gave itself such a name was pretty self-aware.

Klein and Mike had no objection to this, and with the guide leading the way, they entered the district.

The buildings here were relatively better. The streets were less squalid, and the air was filled with the smells of oyster soup, fried fish, ginger beer, and the smell of various food and beverages left behind by street vendors, as well as the fishy smell of fish-related products.

While walking here, Klein felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity. It was as if he had returned to Tingen City, to Iron Cross Street, and to the street outside the apartment where he had originally lived in.

The only difference was that Backlund was closer to the sea and had more traffic. There was a lot more fish.

“This is a relatively good apartment in this area. Back when I loitered around here, I discovered that the gentlemen and ladies inside are all, hmm—quite clean.” Old Kohler pointed to a pale yellow three-story building.

As they got closer, they noticed a sign hanging in front of the apartment. It had a picture of a pocket watch, a clock, and a screwdriver, with the words “Watch Repair.”

“A watch craftsman lives here?” Klein dug up a similar scene from the memory fragments of the original Klein.

Back then, Benson, Melissa, and himself had gone to somewhere similar to repair the silver pocket watch which his father had left behind, but despite repairing it several times, it would quickly break. This continued until Melissa fiddled with it and ultimately fully repaired it. It became the most decent thing on Klein’s person during that period of time.

After Klein's "death", the pocket watch, which had both monetary and sentimental value, was not buried with him.

It should now belong to Benson, right? I wonder if he will think of me every time he takes out that pocket watch... Klein suddenly blinked and curled the corner of his lips.

"Probably." Mike wasn't sure.

If anything went wrong with his pocket watch, it was usually sent to the original watch store he bought it from. The store would then send it to a repairman or to a craftsman who had partnered with them.

As soon as they entered the apartment, they saw a middle-aged man with a messy beard.

The gentleman had just come out of the bathroom and was about to return to his room. When he saw the three strangers come in, he hurriedly asked, "Do you want to repair something?"

What a coincidence... We actually met the craftsman immediately... Klein was slightly puzzled.

Mike took out his pocket watch, smiled, and said, "Yes, my pocket watch has recently not been keeping time well. Can you help me take a look?"

He didn't reveal his identity and planned to interview him over some casual chit chat.

The middle-aged man immediately revealed a smile and led them into a two-bedroom apartment which had its door half concealed. He pointed at a chair beside the table and said, "Please wait a moment. I'll go get my tools."

"Your tools are not at home?" Mike asked in surprise.

The watch craftsman shook his head and laughed.

"How is that possible?

"A set of tools is very expensive. There's no way I can buy them on my own. The only way is to pool everyone's money together to buy three or four sets, and whoever has business will use them. So, we

moved in together. Heh heh, it's more convenient this way. If we live too far away, we will have to spend extra time and pay for the public carriage to borrow the tools.

As he spoke, he left the room and walked to the side.

So it isn't a coincidence that we met a watch craftsman. Many of the residents here are of this profession... Klein was suddenly enlightened.

Old Kohler looked around the room and enviously said, "Before I fell ill, I lived in such a place as well. My wife would help others sew clothes at home. And my two children, my two children..." Mike sighed and lowered his voice. "I thought watch craftsmen were rich." "Me too..." Klein covered his mouth.

...

After a cordial exchange with several of the apartment's residents, Klein and the others once again embarked on their adventure.

They had walked about a hundred meters when they heard people quarreling along the street.

The two women were using all sorts of obscenities against each other, allowing Klein to learn many words he had never heard before.

The reason for their argument was that the one on the left accused the woman on the right for making the apartment they lived in dirty and noisy. The woman on the right was scolding the woman on the left, thinking that it had nothing to do with her. After all, no one asked her to recruit guests at night and sleep during the day.

"Is that a laundry maid?" Mike asked, frowning slightly.

"Yes, I know her. She's a widow, helping people wash their clothes with her two daughters," Old Kohler answered certainly.

Mike thought for a few seconds and said, "Take me to their place."

Old Kohler nodded and led the two of them around the argument before they entered the dilapidated apartment building that was obviously inferior to the one they had just seen.

As soon as he arrived outside the laundry maid's room, Klein immediately felt the dampness.

In the room hung dresses that were not dried yet. A seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl was squatting in front of a large basin, scrubbing clothes that were covered in bubbles. A girl, that was younger than her, was holding a hot iron wrapped in wet linen cloth. She was carefully ironing the clothes that were done washing and drying. Her careful actions implied that she had been scalded by the steam several times.

This was both their workplace and the place where they slept at night. Wet moisture permeated the room and seeped into their bodies.

In addition, the stench of all kinds of smells was very distinct.

"Doesn't it feel terrible?" Mike pinched his nose. Klein replied in a muffled voice, "I've got a cold." There was no humor in his words.

Mike released his fingers, walked into the room, and said to the two surprised girls, "I'm a reporter. I would like to interview a laundry maid."

The girl who was scrubbing the clothes shook her head numbly and said, "We have a lot of things to do and cannot afford to waste time."

Mike's request for an interview was rejected.

He came out with a heavy expression and silently walked back across the street.

After taking a look, he pursed his lips and said, "Let's continue."

...

City of Silver. After a thorough examination of Derrick Berg, who had experienced hallucinations both visually and auditory, he was brought to the bottom of the spire.

This place took in residents who showed signs of losing control, and various methods were used to save them.

Walking in the gloomy and creepy corridor, he suddenly felt a strange chill.

“Help!”

A sharp shrill voice suddenly sounded from a sealed room. “Help...”

The voice came to a sudden halt, and then there was silence.

This... In the eerie silence, the first thought Derrick Berg had when he came back to his senses was to rescue that person.

However, the two guards that held him in the middle didn't show any reaction to it, as if everything that had just happened was just his imagination.

"Someone is calling out for help," the young Derrick informed the two Dawn Paladins.

On his left, a tall knight clad in silver armor calmly replied, "Don't be fooled.

"That's just the normal behavior of those Beyonders who are on the verge of losing control."

Is that so? Maybe he cried out for help because he just isn't willing to give up and lose control and become a monster... Derrick thought sorrowfully.

Following the change in his mood, the illusory, buzzing sound in his ears became more distinct.

After silently taking a few steps forward, the Dawn Paladin from before pointed to a door on the left and said, "You will be staying here for the time being. We will bring you your food and medicine on time."

As he spoke, he took out an iron-black bottle.

This bottle was constructed from the remnants of the straw-like objects left over from the City of Silver's staple food, Black Faced Grass. Upon encountering a liquid, it would produce a thin film, thereby achieving a waterproof and sealing effect.

Derrick took the bottle and gulped it down, feeling a cool sensation slide down his esophagus and into his stomach.

His entire being rapidly became quiet. The swaying scenes before his eyes stabilized, and the auditory hallucinations in his ears gradually weakened.

Creak!

At the sound of the iron door closing and locking, Derrick entered his own room.

The first thing he saw was a candle flickering with a faint yellow light, and then he made out a low bed, a chair, and a square table.

Other than that, there was nothing else. However, the walls, including the door, were all engraved with complicated and mysterious symbols and labels. They seemed to form a complete seal.

Derrick's emotions were also suppressed by the medicine. He sat down on the bed without the slightest hint of curiosity before lying down.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly heard the sound of someone banging on his door. However, this didn't come from outside his room, but from his neighboring cell.

Derrick sat up and listened. He heard a sharp, high-pitched wail from the knocking.

His hair stood on end as he abruptly stood up, taking an extremely defensive stance.

At this moment, thumping sounds spread to the metal walls that were separated by two rooms, slowly smashing a protrusion.

Derrick was about to pray for holy light when the scene before his eyes suddenly lit up. It seemed as if the entire space around him had been moved to the outside world, just in time for the lightning to streak past.

The sound of the wall being smashed beside him had vanished, and the bottom of the spire regained its silence.

It wasn't an absolute silence. Rather, the sound of light footsteps echoed for a long distance. It only turned silent after the echoes continued on for a long time.

Derrick was wondering what had happened to the Beyonder in the neighboring cell when someone knocked on the metal wall on the other side.

Tak! Tak! Tak!

It was as if someone had bent their finger and was tapping lightly.

“Who is it?” Derrick asked, raising his voice in slight alarm.

The knocking immediately stopped, and after a few seconds, a deep yet rather old voice was faintly transmitted.

“So it turns out to be a young fellow.”

“You are?” Seeing that the other person could communicate rationally, Derrick leaned against the wall and pressed his ear against the cold metal.

The elderly voice chuckled and said, “The person next to you almost lost control several times. He ultimately couldn’t be saved today.”

He completely lost control? Derrick asked through the metal wall, “So he’s become a monster now?”

“No, not a monster, but a corpse. He was finished off by the item sealed in here.” The elderly voice sighed. “I’ve been here for fortytwo years. Yes, those guards told me that they’ve seen too many similar incidents.”

Derrick was surprised and returned with a question, “You’ve been here for forty-two years?”

Normally speaking, losing control could be divided into three stages. The first stage was warning signs, such as auditory and visual hallucinations. In the second stage, the person’s body and mind were already out of control, and from time to time, they would display either terrifying or strange states. As for the third stage, it was a complete breakdown, transforming the Rampager into a terrifying monster.

The time it took from the second stage to the third stage was rather quick. Perhaps just after discovering the symptoms, one would witness a seemingly ordinary Beyonder turn into a monster which could be found deep in the darkness.

In other words, after a second-stage Beyonder was sent to the bottom of the spire, they would either be treated with medicine, rituals, and other methods, slowly stabilizing themselves and allowing them to leave within eighteen months. Otherwise, they would quickly lose control and be purged. It was impossible for anyone to be locked up for forty-two years.

As a first-stage Beyonder, they would only take between a few days to less than twenty days to eliminate all the symptoms and leave, fully treated.

The elderly voice immediately chuckled and said, “That’s right, I also didn’t expect that I would stay here for forty-two years.

“I don’t have any signs of losing control, but they believe I’m rather dangerous and can turn into a monster at any time.”

Derrick frowned slightly and asked curiously, “What happened forty-two years ago?”

At that time, neither of his parents had been born yet.

The elderly voice was silent for a moment before saying, “I was once the captain of an exploratory team.

“We found a destroyed city about half a month away from the City of Silver. Heh, this was calculated based on our speed.

“That city was similar to our City of Silver. It clearly has traces of it being ruled by giants, and it also believed in the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God.

“Unfortunately, they were destroyed; destroyed countless years ago.”

Derrick wasn’t a stranger to such matters. He immediately guessed, “Because you encountered some strange incidents there, you were determined to be at risk of losing control?”

“More or less.” The elderly voice chuckled. “After we explored the core area, we discovered that the city was attempting to change faiths. They created deities that they imagined would save them. However, it was useless; even the statues of those deities were destroyed and spilled all across the land.” At this point, his tone suddenly became heavy.

“However, we met a person there.

“This is the first time in the past 2000 years that our City of Silver had met someone who didn’t belong to our city!

“Outside City of Silver, in the depths of the endless darkness, there really was someone still alive!”

Derrick subconsciously asked, “You brought him back to the City of Silver?”

The elderly voice said after two seconds, “Don’t you feel shocked? “The reason why our City of Silver works so hard to explore the surroundings is to find humans like us. We finally found them 42 years ago!”

This is indeed rather shocking news, but I often see Miss Justice, Mr. Hanged Man, and the others. I often hear of the Loen Kingdom and the seven orthodox gods. Isn’t it very obvious that there are people outside the City of Silver, with cities and countries? Derrick scratched his head, and without much experience, he pretended to be shocked.

“I-I didn’t notice this point.

“This is truly unbelievable. Other than the residents of the City of Silver, there are actually other people!”

“...” The elderly voice remained silent for a while before saying, “Has the City of Silver’s education become so terrible?”

Without waiting for Derrick to speak, he sighed and said to himself, “We very warily invited that person to the City of Silver as a guest. After some consideration, he agreed.

“We monitored and escorted him along the way back, but when we had almost arrived at the City of Silver, he suddenly disappeared...

“We searched everywhere, but we couldn’t find him. After we returned to the City of Silver, my team members went crazy, one by one. They lost control. All of them! Not a single one was spared!

“The six-member council suspected that we were contaminated by something and that the person was not a human at all, but an evil spirit, a monster. So, they locked me up here, and every so often, they would come over to confirm my condition, but they would never tell me what the problem is, nor would they let me out.”

Derrick exhaled heavily and asked, “Do you remember what that man looked like?”

“...He looked very ordinary, and nothing about him stood out. He was dressed just like us, and except for me remembering that he was a man, I can’t remember what he looked like... However, the elders should be able to use Beyonder means to directly see him from my vague, forgotten memories,” the elderly voice recalled for a nearly a minute and said with a bit of pain.

Derrick pressed him, casually, “Did he say what his name was? Did he tell you about his origins?”

The elderly voice acknowledged tersely.

“He told us that his name was...”

He paused for a moment before saying, “Amon.”

...

Sunday morning, in the factory district.

In the past two days, Klein and Mike “visited” many places in East Borough under old Kohler’s guidance.

As a result, Mike witnessed five or six people huddled together in a single room, and that wasn’t the worst case he saw.

In the poorest areas of East Borough, an ordinary bedroom could accommodate ten people. The precise division of the right to use the floor and the time of use—day or night—shocked the reporter.

Moreover, poverty didn’t discriminate between men and women. In those places, people of different genders squeezed in tight spaces without being able to abide by societal norms. Certain incidents which deserved time in court happened all the time. Whether it was men or women, all of them were always facing the threat of violence.

“...Squalid, crowded, smelly—that’s the most objective impression. I suspect that every one of them has a serious problem of having parasites... Because the houses were built a long time ago in the most rundown districts, they aren’t connected to the sewers. Feces, urine, vomit and other things can be found everywhere. Every house here

only has one public bathroom, or worse, every street only has one public toilet...

“They’re extremely busy every day, but they can only barely fill their stomachs without any savings. As long as they’re unemployed for a few days, they’ll fall into an irredeemable abyss... I don’t think they would even be afraid of death if they were given even a little hope...” Mike wrote in his investigation manuscript.

In addition, the reporter was impressed by the tramps who wandered the streets in the middle of the night, the girls who stood numbly by the street or in the bars, as well as the drinkers who completely let loose with their drinking. They didn’t hold back on using violence and didn’t consider the future. All of this left a deep impression on this reporter.

He grew more and more silent.

Chapter 356: Informant Fee

Cough!

Mike Joseph took out his handkerchief, covered his mouth, and coughed several times.

The smog in the factory district was thicker than anywhere else. The air was gray with a yellowish tint as though it was floating dust. Occasionally a pungent, suffocating odor that even Mr. Reporter, who was long used to the Backlund air, could not bear.

He turned to Klein who was also coughing softly.

"I've always been a huge supporter of the government's establishment of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council and the alkaline industry inspector, but only today did I learn that the problem has become so serious."

"If we don't take effective measures, it may become a tragedy in the future." Klein tried hard to clear his blocked nose.

Perhaps the whole of Backlund would be shrouded in smog that results in one's vision not exceeding five meters, and it's possible that an evil god would descend or be born in such a backdrop... he added silently.

Old Kohler didn't quite understand the conversation. He cleared his throat that was filled with thick phlegm and led the reporter and the detective around the watchman and into a lead factory.

Most of the workers were women. They were working busily without any protection, and the factory floor was filled with dust.

Looking at the "tiny particles" floating in the air, Klein felt like he was looking at toxic gas. The young ladies without masks were like lambs waiting to be slaughtered.

For a moment, he felt as though he was back in Tingen, back to the time when he had helped Sir Deweyville deal with the grievance haunting him.

He seemed to have already witnessed the future of each and every female worker—some of them with throbbing heads, some with

blurred vision, some turning hysterical, some with gums with a blue line, and finally, they either went blind or fell dead.

It's like a large-scale, bloody sacrificial ritual. The only difference is that the target is that flashing symbol of money... If the Aurora Order, Rose School of Thought, and other evil sects could make good use of similar situations, just like what Lanevus did, there would be a huge problem... Klein covered his mouth and nose as he quietly watched.

Mike Joseph muttered in surprise and anger, "How can this be?

"How can they be like this?

"A while ago, all sorts of newspapers and magazines were focused on the issue of lead poisoning. Why aren't they using any precautionary measures at all?

"They can't even bear to use a mask?

"These factory owners are murderers!"

He truly is a reporter with a sense of righteousness. Even though he isn't young, he's rather stingy, and his acting is pretty outstanding, he still retains his original pure motives... But how is he so aware of lead poisoning? Right, I forgot. I had gotten Sir Deweyville to advertise the dangers of lead poisoning on the newspapers and magazines... It seems like he did it well, but for some people, what does it matter if one or two of the lower class commoners die? There are plenty of people waiting for jobs! Klein thought with a heavy heart.

As a senior journalist, Mike didn't lose his reason. He quietly observed and asked a few workers who had changed shifts, then he left the lead factory.

Subsequently, they entered one factory after another, but lost their mood to discuss anything when they saw the squalor of the place and the intensive labor involved.

It was almost noon when Klein suddenly discovered that there were a lot of people gathered outside a factory. They were mostly women, and they were excitedly shouting something and were trying to rush in.

"What happened?" Mike asked Old Kohler, puzzled.

Old Kohler was also puzzled.

“I’ll go over and ask.”

He jogged to the outside of the factory and blended into the crowd. It took him several minutes to get back to Klein and Mike. “They’re going to smash those new machines!” Old Kohler took a breath and got to the point.

“Why?” Mike hadn’t been in charge of similar news before, and so he didn’t know much about the situation. As for Klein, he had an inkling of the reason.

Old Kohler pointed to the factory and said, “This is a textile factory. They wish to use the latest textile machines, so the number of people in charge of controlling the machines needed will decrease. It seems... it seems like they’re going to fire a third of the workers!

“The female workers want to smash the machines and get their jobs back, or else they’ll probably not survive. Perhaps, the only choice is for them to become street girls.”

Mike opened his mouth. From the shape of his mouth, he looked like he was going to say “fools,” but he didn’t say anything in the end. He just looked in silence and didn’t even move closer.

“Let’s go back. I’ve pretty much finished my investigative interviews.” After a long time, Mike sighed.

All three of them turned around and began to walk out of the factory district. No one spoke as they walked.

As they were about to part, Mike glanced at Klein and spoke in a low voice.

“Do you think those women can still find anything else to do if the lead factories who do not provide protection are shut down, or if their bosses are sent to court?”

Klein gave it some serious thought and said, “If it’s just a few factories, there won’t be much of a problem, but some female workers might suffer from the hunger and cold while looking for other jobs, and they

would gradually lose their strength because they don't have any savings.

"It would be a disaster if too many factories are shut down in a short period of time, not to mention the people who lose their jobs after the new textile machines are used."

The Backlund factory district alone might have thousands or even tens of thousands of unemployed workers, who have no food or clothing, roaming the streets like zombies. They might lower the conditions of their pay in order to snatch the jobs of others... Who knows how many people in East Borough will lead an even more difficult life or die as a result. It would be a hell-like scene, and even if this world doesn't have Beyonder powers, it would still bring about a huge disaster. And now, the various evil gods are lurking in the darkness, waiting... Klein swallowed all the words in his mind.

Mike fell silent again, and after paying ten pounds and six soli, he left the smoke-emitting factory district in a carriage.

Klein looked at the carriage ride into the distance but didn't say anything.

Back when he was a Nighthawk, he had known and come into contact with the lives of the poor, but the impression left on him wasn't as deep this time.

A multidimensional observation revealed a human abyss in front of his eyes.

East Borough is truly filled with hidden dangers and tinder-like threats. If one isn't careful, it can be ignited by a cult... Klein pondered for a few seconds and said, "Kohler, I'd like to ask you to help me keep an eye on the situation in East Borough. Oh, only when you're not bogged down by work.

"I'll pay you, giving you the money to build a relationship with the other workers. Every week, we will set a time to meet at the coffee shop from before." Old Kohler's eyes lit up.

"No problem!"

He made no mention of the price, and he fully trusted the good detective.

Klein weighed his options and said, “Every time we meet, I’ll give you 15 soli as funds and compensation. If you provide me with information that I’m satisfied with, there will also be an additional 5 soli as payment.”

“A pound?” Old Kohler blurted out in shock.

In his warmest and happiest days, he was paid only twenty-one soli a week, or one pound one soli.

“Yes.” Klein nodded. “You have to pay attention to your words and actions. Don’t be in a hurry to gather information. Maintain a state of speaking less and listening more. Otherwise, you’ll be in danger.”

Informant fees such as these can theoretically be reimbursed, but I’m now a self-sponsored fifty-pence party [1]. Klein sighed as he gave a self-deprecating laugh.

...

Empress Borough, in Miss Audrey’s study within Earl Hall’s luxurious villa.

The blonde was listening to Miss Escalante, her psychology teacher, as she occasionally stroked Susie, the big dog who was sitting beside her.

With dark hair that went all the way down to her waist, Escalante Oseleka noticed that the dog also seemed to be listening intently. She couldn’t help but smile and pause for two seconds.

Following that, she continued with her introduction.

“There are currently no completely orthodox theories in the field of psychology. There are several schools of thought, such as Psychoanalysis, Personality Analysis, and Behavioral Psychology.

“Of course, research on the mind is not only performed by psychologists and psychiatrists. Many professionals in the field of mysticism are also doing similar work. Among them, the most famous

one is, heh—sorry, I've deviated from the curriculum. Let's return to the topic just now and talk about Psychoanalysis."

Audrey could clearly notice Escalante's intention to guide the topic; therefore, she feigned ignorance and asked curiously, "Teacher, I'd like to know more about the research situation for the mind in the field of mysticism.

"As you know, I'm very interested in that."

Escalante pursed her lips, frowned, and said in embarrassment, "But there are vows of secrecy. I mean, these theories and research are part of the secrets of the mysticism circles. They're privy to those on the inside."

"Is that so... Th-then can I join?" Audrey asked expectantly. "They aren't involved in anything evil, right?"

"Ha, how is that possible? It's just a seminar organized by enthusiasts." Escalante diverted the topic after mentioning it. "Let's talk about this later. Let's continue with the lesson first."

I've got to know where to draw the line. I'll do it one step at a time. If this is the general trait of the members of the Psychology Alchemists, then I don't have to worry too much about it being filled with lunatics and perverts like Mr. A... Audrey deliberately put on an expression of reluctance when skipping the subject, but she still politely listened to the theoretical foundations of Psychoanalysis.

When the class was over, and after sending Escalante off, she returned to the study, carefully closed the heavy wooden door, and said to the huge golden retriever, "Susie, what do you think of her?"

"She's not sincere!" Susie answered flatly.

Then, she tilted her head and said, "However, what she said is very interesting. I think it's even more interesting than meat and biscuits!"

Susie, do you wish to be a psychiatrist in the future? Specializing in the treatment of mental illness in animals? For example, that horse which is suspected to suffer from depression at the Glaints... Audrey suddenly fell into deep thought, wondering if she should prepare a special white

coat and gold-rimmed glasses for Susie to look a little more professional.

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1. Play on words of 50 Cent Party.

When he got back to Minsk Street from the factory district, Klein had a simple lunch and took a nap. He didn't wake up until the evening when the sky had darkened.

But even so, he still felt exhausted, exhaustion that stemmed from the depths of his heart.

After quite some time of being lost in thought, Klein went down to the first floor and lit the gas lamp. He prepared to sit on the sofa and read the day's newspapers, but when he glanced around, he saw an invitation letter on the coffee table.

He was stunned for a moment before realizing that it was an invitation letter which Mrs. Stelyn Sammer had sent her maidservant to deliver a few days ago.

I almost forgot about this... The disguised matchmaking banquet... Klein put down the invitation letter and walked to the bathroom on the first floor. He used cold water to wash his face, sprucing himself up to look much more energetic.

Compared to when he first arrived at Backlund, there was a much thicker black stubble around his lips and under his chin. Although it didn't completely eliminate his scholarly bearing, it made him look more mature and rugged.

Someone who doesn't really know me well wouldn't be able to recognize me in person... Klein exhaled silently, wiped his face clean, and put his gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose.

He took a short break, changed into a shirt with a starched collar and a black tailcoat, and then, quite formally, he put on his silk half top hat and picked up his cane stick and invitation letter before leaving the house for the unit beside his.

Amidst the tinkling of the doorbell, he saw Julianne, the maidservant, open the door, and Stelyn with her blonde hair coiled up high, and her ears adorned with silver earrings.

Klein took off his hat, bowed, and praised politely, “Mrs. Sammer, you are very beautiful today.”

Although his words were extremely perfunctory, it was true that she was much more beautiful than usual. It appeared that her ability to doll herself up meticulously had experienced a significant breakthrough.

It seems like the adultery case made her besties with Ma’am Mary. Besides, Mary is now a tycoon with a wealth of tens of thousands of pounds, and she has been admitted into the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, allowing her to acquaint herself with many people in power. She must have had sufficient experience in the areas of makeup, clothing, accessories, and so on... Klein nodded in understanding.

The corners of Stelyn’s mouth couldn’t help but curl up.

“These are my new earrings that cost eight soli.”

Lady, you haven’t changed in the slightest... Klein smiled and handed his hat, cane, and coat to the maidservant.

The fireplace and the pipes in the room brought the warmth of early summer. Many women and young ladies were not dressed that conservatively. Some of their fair arms were exposed, while others bared their creamy chests.

“Luke is talking business with some friends. Let me apologize on his behalf.” Stelyn played her role as the female host to its fullest. “Have your meal first. I’ll introduce you to a few welleducated ladies later.”

Actually, there’s no need for that. Just let me eat in peace... Klein smiled.

“I can already smell the fragrance of the food.”

Since there were quite a lot of guests, with over twenty of them, the dinner was in the form of a buffet. Klein took a plate and walked around, and he found that the food was a lot more varied than before.

Cold trout, chicken pie, mutton stew with peas, salted breast, curry, roast beef, turkey, beef tongue pastry, ham, salad, and cream cake...

The alcohol provided was still champagne and red wine.

This suited a carnivore's palate very well. Klein, with his large plate, didn't make conversation with anyone. He hid in a corner and slowly savored the food.

It's not as good as the chefs at the Quelaag Club... From time to time, he would inwardly make comments on the food.

He was about to go for second helpings when he was finally discovered by Stelyn Sammer.

At the same time, he saw an acquaintance beside the lady. He was none other than Lawyer Jurgen with his serious expression.

Right, Jurgen is also a bachelor... Klein smiled and walked over, taking the initiative to ask, "How is Mrs. Doris's recovery?" Jurgen uncomfortably tugged at his bow tie.

"She'll be discharged next week."

"That's great," Klein sincerely said with mixed emotions.

At that moment, Stelyn had already brought a few young ladies over and introduced them.

"This is Mr. Jurgen Cooper, a senior solicitor, who earns at least three pounds a week. He often gets a commission from the cases he handles, and he definitely earns more than two hundred pounds a year. Furthermore, he is young and capable. He will most likely become a great lawyer in the future.

"This is Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, a well-known detective. His income is unstable, but he is paid handsomely for every mission he receives, for example ten or fifty pounds."

Lady, isn't this too direct... Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

Jurgen, who was standing beside him, evidently frowned.

Without feeling that she had made a faux pas, Stelyn continued the introductions.

"Miss Sarah Taylor. Her parents are teachers at a grammar school...

"Miss Angelina Watson. Her father is a civil servant at the Backlund Police Department..."

...

Klein smiled numbly and greeted each lady.

After Stelyn was done, Jurgen said in a deep voice, “Mrs. Sammer, it’s impolite to mention the income of others in front of others.”

Stelyn wasn’t mad; instead, she replied very seriously, “No, it’s very important.

“If you end up liking each other and decide to start a family, then income is essential.

“Think about it, there must be meat, vegetables, fruits, milk, white bread, butter, cream, and other foods every day. It costs at least a pound and five soli a week on food alone, not to mention the alcohol. In addition, to rent a better house is nearly a pound a week. Yes, there’s also the need to purchase water, gas, charcoal, soap, and the like. One still needs to consider transportation expenses. This adds up to about ten soli.

“That is just the most fundamental expenses. Are you not bringing your wife to a musical concert or to go watch a play?

“Don’t you need to get new clothes every year? Ladies, I believe that a family must spend at least 30 pounds a year on it in order to be considered to be living a decent life.

“In addition, there is the salary of the maid, the cost of education for any children, the emergency money that’s needed to be set aside for medical treatment, as well as the expenditure of some necessary decorations.

“Only with an income of more than 200 pounds a year can those needs be met. Only then can a happy family be achieved.

“Thus, in order to not delay everyone’s time or cause any misunderstandings, I believe it is necessary to include this in the introduction.”

As a lawyer, Jurgen was momentarily unable to provide a rejoinder. Fortunately, he always had a serious and stern expression on his face.

How big-hearted... But the basic etiquette is to tell the two parties this information in private, and of course, I know exactly why you're making the introductions straight to their face... Klein smiled.

"Yes, income is very important.

"Only with an income of more than 400 pounds a year can one host a dinner at this level. Only with that much can one afford to have his wife be dressed in beautiful dresses and exquisite earrings."

Stelyn raised her chin slightly as she tried her best to suppress her smile and said, "430 pounds. I mean that there must be some savings each year, to prevent any accidents or to have spare cash to invest into stocks or bonds."

That was her husband's approximate annual income.

After finding a common topic for the two groups of strangers, she left and greeted the other guests. Klein could also clearly sense that Sarah, Angelina, and the other ladies were more interested in Lawyer Jurgen. After all, he was a good-looking man, and his job and income were very stable.

As for a private detective who might be locked up in the police station at any time, they were not the first choice for middleclass women. Besides, Klein now looked rugged with his beard. It wasn't a surprise that the girls would remain a little apprehensive towards him.

After a short casual chat with them, he found an excuse to leave before hiding in a corner and eating while he enjoyed watching Jurgen's awkward and helpless performance.

At this moment, it was a wonder where his eloquence as a lawyer had gone to.

A few minutes later, the two children of the Sammers ran past Klein while playing.

They noticed the gentleman in the corner, stopped, and, with widened eyes, asked curiously, "Mr. Moriarty, we heard that you're a detective?"

"Yes." Klein smiled in response.

The little girl said innocently, “Can you tell us about the cases you’ve cracked?”

Her twin brother nodded immediately.

The cases I cracked? If it doesn’t involve wraiths, puppets, or Devil dogs, then it’s about finding cats or catching an adulterer. There’s really nothing suitable for children... Klein thought for a few seconds, then chuckled.

“Alright, this is a story about treasure.

“An officer who had just returned from East Balam was suddenly murdered...”

He had mostly forgotten the detective novels he had read in his previous life, so he could only make them up based on a vague impression. The two children didn’t care about the irrationality of the plot and listened very seriously, even learning to ask “what happened next.”

Without realizing it, Klein was a lot more relaxed.

When the banquet was almost over, and he was about to leave, he saw that Stelyn’s face was filled with joy.

“What is the cause for celebration?” Klein casually asked.

Stelyn raised her head slightly and replied with a reserved smile, “Mary has received a luncheon invitation from the chief secretary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, Mr. Hibbert Hall, on Monday.

“This gentleman is the eldest son of Earl Hall, a true nobleman. He has invited all the members of the council and has allowed them to bring two or three friends with them.” Stelyn paused.

“Luke and I were just invited by Mary.”

...

Monday afternoon.

Dressed to the nines, Stelyn Sammer, who was accompanied by her husband Luke Sammer, followed Ma'am Mary to Empress Borough where they saw a large building.

Marble statues, pools, fountains, gardens, and lawns reflected themselves in her eyes, making her feel nervous even before she entered the villa.

"Luke, does my necklace not match my dress?" she asked her husband as she tilted her head.

Luke shook his head and laughed.

"Darling, you're too nervous.

"You don't have to worry about that. The nobles only live in a place that's slightly bigger than ours and eat a little better. We aren't lacking in any way."

Stelyn nodded when she heard that, as though she had found her confidence.

Entering the villa, they saw the gorgeous crystal chandelier, the hall which could accommodate many dancers, and the plates of delicious food.

Foie gras, pan-fried Dragon-Bone Fish, baked lobster... Aurmir grape wine, misty champagne... It's exactly the same as the magazine's description. Stelyn looked at the food with curiosity, thinking that she could have such a meal on a holiday or during new year's if they scrimped a little.

Except for the Aurmir wine and the misty champagne... she finally added in her mind.

At this moment, her gaze suddenly straightened as she saw a young girl wearing a beige palace dress walking over.

The girl had blonde hair and green eyes, and she was abnormally beautiful. She wore a pair of white silk gloves with a pair of small beautiful emerald earrings. She exuded pureness and elegance.

She's just like an angel... Even though she had always been proud of her appearance, Stelyn couldn't help but exclaim in admiration, and she felt an inexplicable sense of inferiority at that moment.

"Hello," she clumsily greeted with the etiquette she had just learned.

"Hello," the girl returned the greeting gracefully.

After they had passed each other, Stelyn accompanied her husband and Mary to meet the distinguished guests and the noble, Mr. Hibbert Hall.

After a while, she walked to the balcony by herself, intending to ease her mood. However, she unexpectedly saw the angelic girl from before.

She was looking out over the landscape, a large golden retriever obediently sat beside her rose ribbon-rimmed shoes.

"It's so cute." Stelyn made an attempt to make conversation.

The young girl replied with a faint smile, "Let me thank you on Susie's behalf for your praise."

As she looked at the duo, Stelyn suddenly felt that she should own a similar pet for herself.

This was the only way to showcase the Sammers' dignity! She asked in a measured tone, "I heard that the nobles rear a lot of hunting hounds. Is this one of them?"

"Yes." The girl whose emerald-green eyes looked more enchanting than her earrings' gems lightly nodded.

"May I know how much money is needed to buy one?" Stelyn asked with a smile.

The pure and elegant girl looked down at the huge golden retriever and, without minding the question, answered with a slight smile, "450 pounds."

Chapter 358: The Sun's Worry

On a luxurious carriage on their way leaving Earl Hall's villa.

Luke was chatting with Ma'am Mary about the distinguished guests, such as the chairman of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council and chief of the National Weather Service, Sir Ders Shaw; or the council member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council and president of the Royal Meteorological Society; House of Commons Member of Parliament, Mr. Cave; or Midseashire Medical Health's director-in-charge and renowned doctor, Mr. Hawkesley.

They were all influential figures in the government, and the royal family or parliament. And the council's final report would be the most important basis for the planned Anti-Pollution Act and Smoke Emission Act.

The Coim Company, which specialized in anthracite and charcoal, was trying to promote and expedite the development, disrupting older but larger competitors from handling the changes.

"They will certainly not be stingy with their money and will certainly lobby the heavyweight Members of Parliament to interfere with our investigation. We must have a clear solution, just like what Mr. Hibbert Hall said. We need to take hold of public opinion and let the newspapers and magazines repeat the horrors of smoke pollution..." Luke was a senior manager at Coim, a key assistant to Coim's major shareholder and person in control, Mary, and he himself was quite capable.

As they chatted, Luke suddenly noticed that his wife was sitting next to him without saying a word, as if she had lost her soul. "Stelyn, what happened?" Luke asked with concern.

Stelyn jolted back to her senses, forced a smile, and said, "Nothing, I'm just a little tired."

"That's right. You must be extremely tense seeing so many important figures. Now, you can finally relax. Exhaustion is a very normal thing. Actually, it's the same for me." Luke smiled.

Stelyn didn't respond; instead, she looked out the window towards the park with a lake.

Her ears were still ringing with the casual words of the young noble girl from before.

"450 pounds.

"A trained hound is priced between 450 and 700 pounds."

...

City of Silver, at the bottom of the spire.

Derrick Berg was locked in a small room, eating food and taking his medicine regularly. As a result, his mental state rapidly improved as his visual and auditory hallucinations were no longer present.

I'll be able to leave in a day or two... It's really hard to stay locked up in such an environment for long periods of time... The former captain of the exploratory team in the next cell has been locked up for 42 years, yet he's still very lucid and rational. If it were me, I definitely would've gone crazy... However, the explorations and strange monsters that he spoke of are rather attractive and even terrifying... Derrick sat on the edge of the bed, looking at the candle that had burned to the end.

Before the Keepers delivered his next round of food and medicine, he would be placed in true darkness.

At that moment, he saw a gray fog spread out as the deep voice of The Fool sounded.

"Prepare for the gathering."

Such a change was fleeting. Derrick focused his attention and subconsciously counted his heartbeats.

However, he soon realized that this wasn't necessary because his current state was one of solitude, and he didn't need to avoid others.

Derrick, who was no longer counting his heartbeats, quickly thought of a question.

Would Mr. Fool's subsequent actions of pulling me above the gray fog be discovered and detected when I'm within the confines of the seal of the mystical object at the bottom of the spire?

These were two mystical items that had prevented the complete destruction of the City of Silver in the face of several calamities!

In his nervousness and uneasiness, Derrick, who had been unable to come to a decision, saw endless dark red lights gushing out of the void and engulf him.

The small, enclosed room turned completely silent. Even the sound of his breathing had become extremely weak.

Suddenly, the metal wall between Derrick and the former exploratory team's captain produced a tapping sound.

This was the signal the two of them used if they wished to talk to each other.

Tak!

The other person bent his finger and knocked again.

After that, what should've been a third tap, that followed in succession, didn't happen.

After a long while, the tapping sound hesitantly rang out again. Following that, both rooms fell into silence, and not a single sound could be heard.

...

After finishing her luncheon, Audrey practiced on the piano before returning to her bedroom while keeping track of the time.

As she passed her father's study, she saw that the door was ajar, and a thick stack of papers lay on the table.

Those weren't there before... Curious, Audrey slowed down and winked at Susie.

As a Spectator, Susie often needed only a small hint to understand what her mistress wanted her to do. Of course, she would also occasionally pretend that she didn't understand, only wishing to lie still.

Susie, who had received the signal, trotted silently into the study, then stretched out her front paws, placed them on the edge of the table, and stood upright.

She quickly glanced at the front page of the stack of documents, returned to Audrey's side, and said in a low voice, "Survey of living conditions at all levels in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district.

"Audrey, what do those words mean?"

Survey of living conditions at all levels in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district? Why did Dad suddenly commission this survey? I don't remember ever mentioning anything about this to him... Audrey was confused and didn't bother to answer Susie's question.

She looked around, and seeing that the servants were at their stations and not paying particular attention to her, she raised her head slightly and calmly turned to enter Earl Hall's study.

At the desk, Audrey looked down at the report and saw that the title was exactly as Susie had described it.

Hmm, it's document typed by a typewriter. The investigator is a reporter named Mike Joseph. There's the Goddess's Sacred Emblem at the bottom... Was this commissioned by the Church of the Goddess? But why is Father given a copy? Oh, Father is a believer of the Goddess, and the Church wants him to provide some support on this matter? That's a good thing... Audrey made a preliminary judgment.

She had originally thought of hiring others to do a similar investigation, but she felt that this was not in accordance with her intention of guiding others behind the scenes. It was very easy to be noticed and no longer be ignored by the other nobles; therefore, she had been hesitant.

Audrey reached for the file and flipped through it. She found that Mike Joseph wasn't the only one reporting on East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. There were also quite a few people who had made their own field investigations from different angles.

Some of them even mentioned the proliferation of cults, and how some Beyonders were colluding with the gangs.

Phew... Audrey looked at the clock in the study and saw that it was almost three. She quickly gave up on reading the report carefully and returned the document to its original state.

Before she left, she picked up a book and used it as a disguise for her purpose of entry.

...

At three o'clock sharp. While the chiming of the hanging clock was still reverberating through the air, Audrey had already appeared inside the majestic palace via the dark red, illusory light and found herself beside the ancient long table.

She smiled, stood up, and bowed in the direction of the seat of honor.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

Having received a light nod in response, she then respectively greeted The Hanged Man, The World, and company. She keenly noticed that The Sun seemed to be a little uneasy.

"What are you worried about?" Audrey asked.

This spared Klein's need to speak, having also noticed that Little Sun didn't seem right.

Entering this mysterious space ahead of time, he tidied the items on the table, tossing them into a corner along with Azik's copper whistle, the Biological Poison Bottle, Numinous Episcopate's copper whistle, and other things. He had then covered them with a thick fog.

Presently, there was only the Black Emperor card on the table before him.

This was an item that matched the identity of The Fool!

Derrick didn't hide anything and immediately recounted his successful "malingering" and how he was sent to the bottom of the spire to be isolated for treatment. Finally, he asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, will that mystical item detect my participation in the Tarot Club?"

How would I know... I don't even know what it is... However, there are currently no strange or powerful forces attempting to invade... Hmm, even the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator couldn't find this place... Klein tapped his finger on the edge of the long bronze table and replied in a "relaxed" manner, "Generally speaking, it wouldn't make any discoveries.

"But some mystical items possess special effects."

Seeing that Mr. Fool had given an affirmative answer, Derrick was immediately relieved. He tersely gave acknowledgment and said, "I'm not sure of its special effects either.

"It's one of the City of Silver's top secrets."

At this point, he suddenly thought of what the former captain of the exploratory team had told him. He blurted out a question, "Have any of you heard of a person named Amon?"

Amon? After a moment's thought, Klein remembered the source of the familiarity.

But he didn't answer in a hurry. Instead, he looked at The Hanged Man, knowing full well that this middle-ranking member of the Church of Storms also knew "Amon," and perhaps he knew even more than he did. Similarly, Audrey also looked at The Hanged Man. She had also heard the name from him the last time.

Fors listened with a blank face, feeling that the things discussed here were always outside the scope of her knowledge.

Alger frowned and asked in confusion, "You ran into a man who called himself Amon while you were exploring the surrounding areas of the City of Silver?

"Or perhaps, you discovered related records?"

Derrick nodded seriously and said, "Yes, forty-two years ago, an exploratory team encountered a man claiming to be Amon in the depths of the darkness. After they returned to the City of Silver, they lost control one after another. Only one of them was left, and he was imprisoned at the bottom of the spire, in the cell next to me."

“Maybe he went mad too and that was just a figment of his imagination...” Fors, with a wealth of novel creation experience, postulated a guess.

Alger glanced at Mr. Fool who sat at the end of the table. Seeing him appear staid and without expressing anything, he boldly said, “Imagination is a possibility, but one shouldn’t imagine the name ‘Amon’ for no reason.”

He turned his head to The Sun and said, “In the Fourth Epoch, uh — about 1500 years ago in the kingdom we live in, there was a family with strange powers. They belonged to the Tudor Dynasty, and their surname was Amon.

“Even in an era with numerous High-Sequence Beyonders, the surname of the clan was taboo.”

Justice Audrey asked instead of The Sun, "Why?"

The Hanged Man, Alger, didn't answer her directly as he continued on, "Abraham, Antigonus, Amon, Jacob, and Tamara are the five great families that supported the establishment of the Tudor Dynasty, and they were second only to the Blood Emperor.

"Among them, the Amon family is the most mysterious one. They have the least history left behind, and they seem to have been distorted and covered up by some kind of power.

"There was a piece of information that came from the King of the Five Seas, Nast. The Amons are a family of blasphemers, and they wield the secrets to usurp the powers of deities!

"Also, the Amon family call themselves the descendants of the ancient Sun God."

Derrick Berg was left confused. In his knowledge of myths, there was no such thing as an ancient Sun God!

Among the eight ancient deities—Giant King, Aurmir; Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt; Mutant King, Kvastir; Elf King, Soniathrym; King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea; Vampire Ancestor, Lilith; Phoenix Ancestor, Gregrace; and Devil Monarch, Farbauti— none of them wielded the authority of the Sun... Derrick seriously considered this problem. *If I really need to make a connection, the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God had shown powers in the Sun domain. Could the Amon family be "His" descendant?*

Noticing that Sun wasn't saying anything, Alger stroked the stubble on his chin and said, "The Amon family is an ancient family clan from one to two thousand years ago. It is almost history itself. I'm very curious; why did the gentleman that you met appear around the City of Silver? What is his goal?"

That's right, how could the Amon family, which exists in the "world" of Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and company, appear around our City of Silver... Why did he fail to fulfill his promise after accepting the request of "being a guest?" He mysteriously left and caused the entire

team to lose control. Yes, other than the captain... What did he want to do? What was he looking for? If he is a descendant of the Lord, perhaps his purpose is the same as mine: to find out the cause of the cataclysm from ancient times and to find out the truth of the curse... Derrick let his imagination run wild for a moment. After a while, he shook his head and said, "Mr. Hanged Man, I'm unable to answer your question. I'm also trying to figure out this matter."

Alger replied, looking somewhat disappointed, "Try to communicate with the former captain in your neighboring cell more. See if you can dig up more information from him."

Upon saying this, he thought for a moment and warned, "However, you must be careful and prudent. I think that person is very dangerous."

"Very dangerous? You think so too?" Derrick asked, feeling somewhat surprised.

The elders of the six-member council also thought the same!

The Hanged Man looked up at the lofty dome and took a deep breath.

"Those who don't think so are the ones without sound minds."

Seeing that The Sun was still confused, he shook his head and said, "He's the only surviving member of the exploratory team. Just this matter alone is enough to prove that there's something tremendously wrong with him.

"He's been in the dungeon facing Rampagers for forty-two years; yet, he remains very lucid and rational. This shows how weird he is!

"Compounded with the matter regarding the mysterious Amon, the danger is obvious."

These were the little bits and pieces that Derrick had thought about in the past, but he hadn't yet connected together. When he heard that, he suddenly became enlightened and immediately said sincerely, "I understand.

"Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man!"

Audrey, who was listening attentively and observing, resisted the urge to cover her face with her hand. She felt that The Sun was even more naive than she was.

Seeing that everyone's curiosity had been satisfied, that even the gloomy Mr. World had slightly adjusted his posture, and that The Sun didn't seem to have any other requests, she turned her head to the end of the long bronze table and said with a smile, "Mr. Fool, I request a private exchange."

Again... Klein was amused as he nodded and said, "Sure."

He immediately shielded the senses of The Hanged Man and company, rather than isolating himself and Miss Justice. It was mainly because he was afraid that the others might end up communicating out of boredom, thereby exposing the fact that The World was only a repeater.

After receiving the signal, Audrey smiled and said, "Mr. Fool, I have another three new pages of Roselle's diary."

After the Card of Blasphemy was stolen by The Fool's Blessed, she didn't avoid visiting the Royal Museum out of guilt. Instead, she acted as if nothing had happened. She openly requested this to her father, and in the week after the exhibition ended, she got another chance to flip through the notebook.

Audrey thought that appearing unfazed was the best way to avoid suspicion.

If she maintained the constant act of feeling guilty and did not do what was logical, even if the Church of the God of Steam didn't suspect her previously, they would subsequently feel that there was a problem.

According to her own experience, she believed that the very first few pages of a diary would reveal a lot of information, so she mainly memorized the first three pages.

Without waiting for The Fool to speak, she quickly added, "I understand that this isn't a matter that requires a private exchange, but I wish to keep this from Miss Magician for a week or two. That way, even if she knows that you need Roselle's diary in the future, she wouldn't suspect that I'm Justice."

She had seen Fors and Xio once midweek, and by leading the conversation, she had naturally mentioned how her beloved dog, Susie, had chewed the Roselle notebook, causing it to be irrecoverable.

Typically speaking, she no longer needed to hide the fact that Mr. Fool needed Roselle's diary, but using her Telepathist abilities, she simulated what Fors would think, believing that she would have such a thought.

"What? That's a diary? That's a diary Roselle recorded his secrets in? Even Mr. Fool places so much importance on it!

"Eh, I recall that Miss Audrey has some. Wait a moment. She happened to have those diary pages chewed up by her dog a few days ago.

"Isn't this too much of a coincidence?"

To prevent Fors from having such thoughts, Audrey hoped to keep it a secret for at least another week.

After becoming a Telepathist, not only was she able to see the aura and the emotional color of the target, but she was also able to read the superficial thoughts of others and could also simulate their thoughts. Thus, she understood one thing—that in the process of "guiding" others, she had to try her best not to be abrupt or act against logic and reason. Only when all the details were subtle enough and reasonable enough to make the target not realize that she was being guided, would she be considered a qualified Telepathist.

"Subtle" and "reasonable" are the two most important keywords!

Audrey concluded in her mind.

The reason why she went to read Roselle's "notebook" again was precisely to avoid being unreasonable.

She truly is worthy of being a Telepathist. She's recognized long ago that Miss Magician is one of the two people that she had recommended... Klein smiled in a noncommittal manner.

"What do you want to exchange those three pages for?"

This question was asked with confidence because, after obtaining the Book of Secrets, his greatest weakness in the field of mysticism had

already been bridged. As for the secrets of the other deities, as well as his knowledge of Sequences, he knew a lot about them. Just any one of them was enough to deal with Miss Justice.

We will still be friends if you don't talk about the Psychiatrist formula... Klein lampooned in his heart.

Audrey had already long thought of her question. She remained reserved for a second before saying, "Mr. Fool, I wish to ask one question. Why is it said that the Cards of Blasphemy hide the profound secrets of the deities?"

Great question! Klein smiled secretly. Giving her a look for her to figure it out herself, he said deeply and calmly, "Sequence 0, Black Emperor."

Sequence 0? There's still a Sequence 0? There's a Sequence 0 above Sequence 1? Is that a Sequence representing a god? The Black Emperor is a god? A series of questions suddenly surfaced in Audrey's mind.

This caused her to be pleasantly surprised, satisfied, and shocked!

Restraining her agitation and unconcealable excitement, she took a deep breath and conjured the three pages of Roselle's diary.

Klein took it, took a quick glance, and confirmed that this was not one of the ones he had seen before.

"23rd February 1143. I've transmigrated to this world for more than a week. I have to write something down and describe the things I have encountered, or I feel like I'll go crazy.

"Hehe, if I write it in Simplified Chinese, I'm sure that no one will be able to decipher it. This world uses alphabetical words!

"I am now Roselle Gustav, but I'll never forget my real name.

"Huang Tao!

"I don't know how I transmigrated either. I carefully recalled and thought about it for a long time, and then I remembered that a few days before my transmigration, I bought a very mysterious silver plate with

some strange symbols and patterns engraved on it. It was extremely interesting.

“However, it did not reappear after my transmigration here.

“It’s not my cheat item!

“Hmm, this is a world similar to ancient Europe. It’s after the Renaissance, and cannons and guns have appeared, but they’re rather crude and primitive.

“As for me, Huang Tao Roselle Gustav, as a fan of online literature, I loved reading transmigration with technology genre novels. I know quite a lot of useful things and specifically read up on the corresponding knowledge!

“This is the stage where I can display my abilities!

“But, I realized that my f**king memory isn’t good! I’ve almost forgotten everything!

“The Heavens allowed me to transmigrate to another world, but I wasn’t given an outstanding memory or a system. Nor was I given a two-way door. How can I survive like this!?

“Alright, I’ll start with some details. When I have the money, I’ll hire a bunch of craftsmen, inventors, and scientists. I’m only responsible for giving them ideas!

“It’s been a long time since I’ve felt so full of anticipation for the future.

“But I still miss Mom and Dad a little...

“Besides, the entertainment in this world is too monotonous. The one or two maids don’t look that good, and their entire bodies exude rustic vibes. It completely shatters my imagination of having young, beautiful maidens accompanying me.

“I haven’t finished reading Lin Gao’s Five Hundred Good-fornothings [1], and there are so many beauties that are awaiting me on Tik Tok. The games, Kings of Glory and PUBG, are still waiting for me. Thinking about them makes me feel a little depressed.”

As Klein read, he nearly frowned.

Initially, he had determined, from the appearance of "Pirate King" and the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," that Roselle had crossed over three to five years earlier than him. But now, he realized that the gap between their transmigrations couldn't be more than a year!

But why was there a difference of nearly two hundred years on this side?

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1. A web novel that has been serialized since 2009, talking about 500 transmigrators.

Klein thought seriously for a while and came up with all sorts of theories, but because he lacked the necessary information, he could only temporarily ascribe the cause of the matter to the difference in the flow of time between the Earth and this world.

Roselle and I have transmigrated less than a year apart, but in this world, we are separated by nearly two hundred years. That is to say, even if I were to spend two hundred years to find a way to return, it's likely that I won't lose the opportunity to meet my parents. At most, I'd have been missing for a year... Klein made a contrasting inference, improving his mood significantly. He instantly felt filled with motivation.

Of course, he himself knew very well that this reasoning was not rigorous, because this was determined by one precondition, and it was currently impossible to confirm it.

What if Roselle transmigrated after me? That might involve socalled spatial-temporal turbulence. When the time comes, there is no guarantee that I'll return to the proper time node... Klein poured cold water on his burgeoning mood.

Roselle's first diary entry was the product of having held back for a long time; therefore, it took up more than two pages. Klein flipped to the end and read the remaining two lines.

"25th February. What a boring world. There are no newspapers and so few novels! I think I need to help this culturally impoverished society, but the premise of this is that I have to get some money and recall how paper is made and how the print press is done.

"As a transmigrator, I can only live on the pocket money that my new dad and mom gave me. I can only occasionally see one or two shiny Fermo gold. What a tragic story.

"However, hunting is quite interesting.

"28th February. This world might be a little different from what I know it to be.

“I got lost while hunting in the woods today. As a result, I saw an unimaginably intense battle.

“In the battle, the man who was surrounded had additional eyes growing on his face—a total of four eyes! They even shot dark green light! Th-this is f**king illogical! Is this a humanoid monster?

“This is actually a fantasy world, right?

“That monster’s opponent was even more powerful. He summoned a pillar of light that burned with golden flames. Yes, I think it was summoned...

“Fortunately, they didn’t discover me. After getting rid of that monster, that person left with the corpse.

“I, Huang Tao, am indeed the protagonist. I discovered the truth of this world a few days after I transmigrated!

“Perhaps they can recognize the mysterious symbols and patterns on the silver token... Of course, I won’t ask. I want to become like them and crack it myself!

“There’s another key reason as to why I said this. I can’t even f**king remember what the pattern looks like. I can only vaguely remember it.”

Indeed the protagonist? Emperor, did you pour all of your eighthgrader syndrome soul into your diary? Klein couldn’t help but lampoon.

He was very interested in the silver plate, which might have been the cause for Roselle’s transmigration, and he was eager to find out what the symbols and patterns on it looked like.

If he could really decipher it by relying on the mysticism knowledge of this world, then transmigration might not have just been a coincidence... Klein put down the diary pages, rapped his fingers on the table, and lifted the screen that isolated The Hanged Man and The Magician.

“Go ahead and trade freely.” Klein leaned back in his chair and smiled.

Fors took a deep breath and said, “I would like to purchase the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater and 20 ml of blood from a Deep Sea Marlin. It will be paid for in gold pounds.”

I still have 430 pounds; I can afford one... she silently encouraged herself.

As for where the rest of the money would come from, she had no idea.

This is one of the main reasons that prevent many Beyonders from advancing... People cannot really attempt to spend beyond their means. If it wasn’t for me having to become a Trickmaster to completely be rid of the influence of the full moon’s ravings, I wouldn’t even consider advancement once I gained rich Beyonder means. I wouldn’t even make contact with this circle. I’ll write books, save up money, drink tea, and stroll the streets with Xio. Once she’s finished with that task, we can travel to different parts of the Northern and Southern Continent. We don’t have to be afraid of danger or accidents, and we can enjoy life... Fors’s thoughts suddenly began to wander.

Just when she thought that no one would respond, Alger said in a low voice, “I saw the Deep Sea Marlin’s blood at the recent gathering of the great pirates, but unfortunately, you’ve already missed it. You should’ve said so earlier. No, I’m mistaken. You hadn’t joined the Tarot Club back then.”

Then what’s the point of saying this? Showing off your experience? Fors curled her lips secretly but said in all seriousness, “Mr. Hanged Man, please keep an eye out for me. I can accept a price between three hundred and four hundred pounds.” Alger sneered.

“The sea is even vaster than the land. Pirates might not even meet each other in half a year. Even on the islands that they dispose of their loot, Beyonder ingredients are seldom gathered.

“Only big cities like Backlund, Trier, St. Millom, and Feynapotter can have many ingredients gathered together. From your accent, you should be a Backlund citizen, or someone who has been living in Backlund for many years.”

You mean that I still need to rely on myself? Fors almost looked up at the high dome.

At this point, Derrick said, “I know roughly where a few Spirit Eaters are active.

“But I don’t need the gold pounds you people talk about.”

... Fors said with a fake smile, “What do you want?”

The formula for the Solar High Priest potion... Audrey quickly answered inwardly.

Derrick thought seriously and said, “The formula for the Solar High Priest potion.”

“That’s a Sequence 7 formula, right? I’ve heard of it, but the formula for this Sequence is at least 750 pounds, and if you’re in a hurry to get it, it can be sold for more than a thousand pounds. Furthermore, the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater and blood of a Deep Sea Marlin do not exceed 400 pounds each. They’re only worth 300 pounds most of the time. Do you understand me?” Fors tried to make it clear to The Sun that this was not an equivalent transaction.

Without hesitation, Derrick replied, “I can give you two or three of the Spirit Eater’s stomach pouches.”

As for the additional need for a Deep Sea Marlin, he didn’t even consider it. He had never even seen the sea before!

What can I do with the additional Spirit Eaters’ stomach pouches... Roast them or fry them? To be honest, I have no idea when I’ll be able to sell it... Most importantly, I’m unable to afford the formula for Solar High Priest... Fors forced a smile and said, “I’ll try searching.”

She thought of the masked Eternal Blazing Sun believer at Mr. A’s gathering who was good at purification. She thought of the Band of Light ring, and she believed that she could get a clue to the potion formula of Solar High Priest.

But I don’t have enough money... Fors thought for a moment, touched her face, looked around, and then asked with great sincerity, “Everyone, do you have any good ways of earning money?”

As soon as she finished her sentence, she realized that everyone had fallen into silence.

Silence could be described by the soundless palace and the quiet gray fog.

From the looks of it, everyone faces this conundrum. As for Mr. Fool, he doesn't need money... Fors wisely shut her mouth.

Isn't the best way to make money be from owning farms, mines, plantations, factories, stocks, etc. Oh, you can also go through the kingdom's bounty notices and complete them in accordance with the price and the period of time at a bearable level... Audrey knew that she didn't have any real experience in making money, so she could only respond with a few words in her heart as if she was joking.

Might I interest you in bicycle projects? Klein resisted the urge to manipulate the words of The World, which would expose his true identity.

After waiting for a few seconds, he maintained an unfathomable posture, making The World gloomily and hoarsely say, "Help me keep a lookout for the Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland and blood, as well as a Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic and a Deep-sea Naga's hair.

Although Klein only had 589 gold pounds left, he now had the Beyonder characteristic of a Werewolf and the Biological Poison Bottle. Furthermore, he was considering to find an opportunity to turn the former into a mystical item and then sell one of them.

In that case, that's more than enough to match the cost of Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredient!

Therefore, he planned to have the members of the Tarot Club help him pay attention in advance so that he wouldn't miss them.

"Alright." The Sun, Derrick, answered first, but he made no promises.

Compared to a Spirit Eater, Human-skinned Shadows and Thousand-faced Hunters aren't monsters that are easy-toencounter.

"Thousand-faced Hunter? I think I've seen a fossil of it," Justice thought as she replied, "Yes, I'll confirm that after I return." That fossil was in Duke Negan's treasury.

If it's already a fossil, its Beyonder characteristic has probably long been taken away... Klein manipulated The World and nodded noncommittally.

After a moment of silence, Alger said, "Help me keep an eye out on a person who was involved in the disappearance of the colonial slaves that was mentioned before.

"He calls himself 'Baelen,' a man with reddish-brown skin and has the clear characteristics of a Southerner, but someone has overheard him speak in a Backlund accent.

"The third tooth on his left is missing, but it could very well have been replaced.

"In addition, there's nothing special about him, and his height is also quite average.

"If you can find traces of him, there will be no problem with the reward at all, with it being at least one hundred pounds or something of equal value."

Even divination can't be completed with such a description, let alone carrying out a search for the person in the real world... Klein looked around and said, "Continue with your free exchange."

...

At the end of the Tarot Gathering, Derrick returned to the real world and found himself in the dark, cramped room.

He sat on the ground cautiously for a few seconds, but he didn't discover any unusual changes. He was finally able to let out a sigh of relief.

Remembering that Mr. Hanged Man had advised him to talk more with the former exploratory team's captain, Derrick walked over to the corresponding metal wall, bent his fingers, and tapped on it.

Tak! Tak!

He completed his signal, but there was no response even after a long time.

Did he fall asleep? Or was he taken to the six-member council? Derrick wondered while looking at the dull metal wall.

At this moment, an elderly and fleeting voice came from the bed behind him, “Are you looking for me...”

"Are you looking for me..."

The moment the voice entered his ears, Derrick froze. His skin tensed up, and his hair stood on end.

Why is he behind me?

Why is he in my room?

What happened to the seal?

What about the effects of the mystical items?

His forehead dripped with cold sweat, and he subconsciously wanted to turn around to take a look.

But his instincts stopped him from doing so.

This instinct originated from the teachings of the City of Silver's General Knowledge of Monsters lessons and the strange scene he had experienced after joining the patrolling teams.

When someone is speaking behind you, don't turn around in a hurry!

Derrick raised his hands and clenched them into fists in front of his chest, then slowly, he turned around, bit by bit.

The room was shrouded in darkness, making it impossible to see anything. However, there was a tint of golden light that was expanding in his two eyes, transforming into what seemed like two miniature suns.

With his Light Suppliant powers, he saw a dark figure sitting quietly on the edge of his bed.

The dark figure rapidly turned clear, revealing a head that had been split in half!

In the middle of his head, two gray brains wriggled like they were alive, trying to get close to each other but being unable to do so.

The thick, viscous liquid on the severed surface of his brain had turned into thin threads, but they were shrinking like maggots.

Each eye that was on the two separate sides were distanced apart, and the nose bridge was separated from the middle. The color of the blood was bright and evident.

The left side of his mouth was open, but the right side of his mouth was tightly shut.

This terrifying monster was naked, and there were numerous dark red wounds on its body.

The countless wounds had torn open savagely, revealing rows and rows of white teeth. They said the same sentence in quick succession, “Are you looking for me...”

It paused for a moment, the corners of its mouth and the edges of its wounds were curling up.

“Look, am I not normal...”

Derrick’s pupils contracted, and without thinking, he placed his folded hands on his chest and raised them to his chin, as if in prayer.

The small room suddenly became bright, and a pure beam of light, swirling with fire, fell from the roof and onto the monster’s body.

The beam was not as grand as the one used by Derrick outside the spire. This was because of the seal here and the mystical item which left him isolated from the spire’s exterior.

But at that moment, Derrick was stunned to see the holy light beam that he had prayed for was suddenly thickening. It was so bright that he couldn’t help but close his eyes.

A few moments later, something purer and thicker separated from the magnificent pillar of light. It was like a man made of light with no facial features and no clothes!

The “man of light” suddenly coruscated and pounced on the monster.

All the “mouths” on the monster suddenly opened, as if it was letting out a blood-curdling screech.

Yet, Derrick heard nothing.

The monster began to tremble violently and quickly disintegrated under the burning and illumination of the “man of light,” disappearing as if it were melting.

Just as it was about to become transparent, a phantom wearing a black classical long robe and a pointed hat suddenly appeared!

The shadow had black hair, black eyes, a wide forehead, and a thin face. It wore a monocle carved from crystal.

As soon as he appeared, the “man of light” exploded, and Derrick’s vision was filled with whiteness.

When his eyesight was restored, he found himself outside the room, in the corridor with the metal lamps set in it, in the dim light of the setting sun.

He tilted his head blankly and looked into the room. He saw a tall, muscular figure in dark trousers and a brown coat.

In front of this figure was the bed which Derrick had been sleeping in. Dawn-like rays of light condensed onto a white leg bone, turning it into a pure white, sharp sword.

Next to the straight sword lay a translucent worm.

It was only the length of a thumb, and its slimness was almost that of a child’s finger. One ring after another, of completely transparent colors, divided it into many sections.

It was a fleeting scene, and without specially counting the number of rings, he had a vague feeling that there were about ten of them.

The tall figure which had its back facing him reached out his hand to pick up the strange translucent worm. As he turned around, he sighed.

“It was close...”

At that moment, Derrick finally saw the face of the tall figure.

His hair was grizzled, unkempt, and rather disheveled. He had deep wrinkles around his cheeks, but there were no wrinkles at the corners of his eyes. Some old scars, that were either deep or twisted, remained on his cheeks.

He was dressed in a flaxen-colored shirt with a checkered leather belt around his waist, and his pale blue eyes were deep and weathered, like a book full of stories.

For a moment, Derrick was stunned, and then, as though he had been in danger all his life, he opened his mouth in pleasant surprise.

"Your Excellency!"

In front of him was Chief of the City of Silver's six-member council, a powerful Demon Hunter who was over a hundred years old, Colin Iliad!

Colin nodded slightly and said, "We always knew that he had a problem, but in order to find out what kind of ulterior motives the man named Amon had, we intentionally didn't eliminate him directly, and we instead locked him at the bottom of the spire, sealed under the influence of mystical items, and we often let Beyonders, who only have symptoms of losing control, live next to him and talk to him. We wanted to see if we could induce some abnormal changes in him in order to learn the information we wanted to know.

"Unfortunately, he had been very normal until today, way too normal.

"Why do you think he suddenly mutated and attempted to break through the seal? Do you have any idea what makes you different from the others?"

So it was purposely arranged for me to live next to the former exploratory team captain... After a few seconds of silence, Derrick said, "Maybe it's because my Beyonder pathway is different from the others. Sequence 9 Bard, Sequence 8 Light Suppliant."

In other words, the Sun pathway... If Mr. Hanged Man is right, that the Amon family is the descendant of an ancient Sun God, then it's normal for me to cause a mutation to happen to him... Derrick felt he knew the truth to a certain extent.

Colin listened without a change in expression. He sized up Derrick for a few seconds before saying, "We were monitoring him. The members of the six-member council took turns, but we didn't expect him to

suddenly mutate. There were zero warning signs, and his actions were very decisive and determined.

“What were you doing in the room just now?”

Derrick, who was considering the relationship between the Sun pathway and the ancient Sun God, didn’t instantly realize what the Chief was asking about.

When he realized it, his mind was still blank as he seriously recalled what he had done.

I didn’t do anything. I just knocked on the wall and tried to talk to him... Before this, before this, I was participating in the Tarot Gathering... The Tarot Gathering! Derrick was suddenly stunned. He felt that things might not be as simple as he had imagined.

He knew that he couldn’t inform the Chief of his thoughts, but he didn’t know what kind of expression to make, so he could only maintain his lonely, reserved silence. He said thoughtfully, “I knocked on that wall three times.

“Before that, the candle in my room had extinguished, and there was complete darkness. I had tried to practice some of my Beyonder powers.”

Colin looked into Derrick’s eyes quietly and said after nearly twenty seconds, “Unfortunately, what Amon left in his soul was not his original body. Moreover, this matter happened too suddenly, so we were unable to obtain the desired result...

“Before his mutation, did you sense anything amiss?” “No.” Derrick shook his head with conviction.

Colin’s eyes suddenly flashed with two complex, dark green symbols, and he reflected Derrick’s body in them.

After nearly ten seconds of silence, the City of Silver’s Chief closed his eyes and said, “Your condition has stabilized. You don’t need any more treatment, so you can go back now.” Derrick was startled.

“Alright.”

He watched Demon Hunter Colin Iliad turn back into the room, pick up the sharp white sword, and turned it over and over in his hands.

He quietly took a deep breath and walked along the corridor towards the exit. On the way, he met the Keepers who had rushed over one after the other.

He slowly walked back home and closed the door. He carefully observed his surroundings for a while, then he sat down on the edge of the bed and recited in a low voice, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, you are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; you are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

“I’ve just experienced something terrifying...”

Derrick recounted what had happened and mentioned his two guesses.

After doing all of that, he felt much more at ease.

And with his tense state of mind relaxing, he felt immense exhaustion wash through him. He lied down and quickly fell asleep.

In the silent and dark room, flashes of lightning would occasionally illuminate everything. Otherwise, it would seem like the dark night.

The sleeping Derrick suddenly flicked his right index finger and leisurely tapped it on the bed.

Once, twice, thrice...

...

After the Tarot Gathering, Klein didn’t divine the Werewolf’s Beyonder characteristic or the Biological Poison Bottle due to his spirituality expenditure. Instead, he went straight back to the real world for a nap. After twenty minutes, he woke up and drew the curtain, allowing the light that penetrated through the mist to bring a certain degree of light into the room.

Sitting on the chair in front of the desk, Klein calmed down and began considering what he needed to do in the short term.

The main goal is to continue concluding the principles of a Magician and make adjustments according to the subtle feedback from my spirituality.

Although principles like "never performing unprepared," "the need to have a stage and a performance," and "completing a performance using means of diversion" do not seem problematic at the moment, if I were to continue acting this way and performing slight adjustments, I'll eventually digest the potion and reach the advancement state. But this sort of acting isn't sufficient. I'm still lacking some of the important principles. Currently, what I'm doing will make the digestion slow and not thorough. Perhaps, it will take a year, or perhaps even two or three years before my Sequence advancement is possible.

And Ince Zangwill won't remain there waiting for me! Only through becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder as soon as possible will I be qualified to take revenge!

Therefore, figuring out the other Magician principles is of utmost importance. I'll first determine them through experimentation whether the applause from an audience will stir my spirituality and result in better digestion of the potion.

Just as Klein was deep in thought, he heard a series of illusory, stacked pleas.

A male voice? Is it Mr. Hanged Man or Little Sun? Klein looked out the window at the gloomy sky, got up, went into the bathroom next door. He locked the door, took four steps counterclockwise, and arrived above the gray fog.

Within that mysterious space, a towering, ancient palace quietly stood. The illusory male voice echoed in a stacked, continuous manner.

Klein glanced at it and confirmed that the prayer was from Little Sun.

He sat in The Fool's seat and stretched out his right hand, emanating his spirituality to touch the corresponding crimson star.

Suddenly, the voice became clear and layered, and Klein quickly figured out what The Sun was talking about.

The former captain of the exploratory team, who had seen Amon, suddenly lost control and strangely penetrated through the seal, arriving at his room. Fortunately, the City of Silver took this matter seriously and had been constantly prepared for it; otherwise, it would have led to a tragedy.

The Sun believes that it's impossible that there was no reason for the man's loss of control. He came up with two possibilities—one was that his own Beyonder pathway met the requirements of being the ancient Sun God's descendant, and the other possibility was that the man might have sensed the Tarot Gathering and Mr. Fool's secret pull.

If it were the former, he wouldn't have waited until today and waited until the end of the Tarot Gathering before losing control... The latter reason has a greater probability... Hmm, this is the first time I've encountered someone who can sense the matters regarding the gray fog... That Amon is very scary! It's no wonder their family was known as the Blasphemers during the Fourth Epoch. Even their last names are taboo... Klein subconsciously looked at the crimson star and the corresponding supplicant. He carefully observed the blurry image of Little Sun to see if there was anything abnormal with him.

Klein believed that Amon wouldn't be so easily eliminated. Even if it was as the Chief of the City of Silver had said—that his body wasn't his main body—it didn't make it any easier to eliminate him!

The only possibility is that the powerhouses in the City of Silver have been using mystical items to monitor him, but is that even possible?

When he decided to let the former leader of the exploratory team lose control and silently penetrate through the seal, he definitely had a plan in place...

In the midst of his thoughts, Klein's eyes suddenly froze as he looked at the prayer scene.

Entwined on the indistinct body of The Sun was a translucent and illusory figure!

He had hands and feet, but he was like a python, twisting around The Sun while his head rested behind The Sun's head!

In the blurred image, he was wearing a black classical robe, a pointed hat, and a crystal monocle.

The Sun didn't notice any of this!

... Klein almost drew a cold gasp, shocked at the strange means that were available to that entity.

He vaguely understood the other party's intention.

By residing in the Spirit Body of The Sun, he is waiting for the next Tarot Gathering, allowing him to sneak above the gray fog, like a virus or a Trojan horse!

When that happens, my control over this mysterious space might be snatched away... He's truly a Blasphemer! Fortunately, Little Sun is rather naive and straightforward, so he immediately reported this to me. Through the corresponding crimson stars and the power of the gray fog, I was able to discover his peculiar state... Klein drew a breath and tried to calm himself.

At that moment, he had to respond. He had to quickly think of a way to get Amon out of The Sun, or temporarily expel The Sun out of the Tarot Gathering.

Looking at himself, from his Beyonder powers of Magician, Clown, and Seer; to Azik's copper whistle; the Black Emperor card; the All-Black Eye; the Sun Brooch; the Biological Poison Bottle; and so on, Klein couldn't find a way to deal with Amon.

Amon's Sequence is definitely above Sequence 4, and the means available to him must be sufficiently strange. To be able to escape from the City of Silver's mystical artifacts and powerful Demon Hunters, it means that he isn't something which can be easily eliminated with ordinary objects or powers!

After thinking for a moment and looking around, Klein discovered there was only one possibility of eliminating Amon— the gray fog, this mysterious space.

I have to think of a way to pry its power away... The sacrifice and bestowment ritual from before are examples... With this train of thought, Klein turned his gaze to the Book of Secrets.

This mysticism book, which originated from the ancient Shaman King Klarman, recorded many mysterious rituals that required help from the Primordial Moon.

Klein, who had been reading it before, vaguely remembered that a few of them were suitable for such a scenario.

Of course, it was unknown what changes he would have to make after directing it towards The Fool. He could only keep his hopes up and try his best... As Klein flipped through the book, his eyes stopped at a ritual.

"Blood Moon Sacrifice."

This ritualistic magic was clearly different from the simple ones that Klein had learned before, and it used the element of a secret deed.

The process was to use a material rich in spirituality, preferably the blood of a Beyonder, to write the honorific name of the target of the secret deed on an animal hide, and to draw the corresponding symbols and magic labels. If necessary, the specific circumstances of a given time and place also had to be taken into account.

When this was done, the ritual host would set up the altar, pick up the piece of hide, and repeat the honorific name, letting their spirituality to seep into the hide, gradually spreading it out, little by little to form a hidden bond with the corresponding great being, and obtaining the corresponding Soul Body experience or help.

The final outcome of this ritual was unknown. It all depended on what the hidden or great being bestowed. Or rather, according to one's characteristics, the knowledge and power one could gain through that secret bond were also different.

This kind of rather vague and subjective ritual gave Klein enough freedom to modify and manipulate it. If he had assumed the stance of forcefully eliminating Amon from the beginning, then Amon would have certainly resisted and created a dangerous accident.

If the target of the secret deed were the True Creator or the Hidden Sage, it's normal for the ritual to end in madness... Klein mumbled as he conjured a pen and paper and began to modify the Blood Moon Sacrifice to turn it into a secret deed ritual that belonged to The Fool.

First, he replaced the honorific name with the three sentences of "King of Yellow and Black." Then, he replaced the symbolic symbol with the one behind the seat of The Fool. It was a unique symbol made up of a part of the Pupil-less Eye that represented concealment and the Contorted Lines that represented change.

The third was to design the corresponding magic label according to the symbols and his mysticism knowledge. This was the most difficult step. Any mistakes would cause the entire ritual to produce unpredictable developments.

Lastly, he had to modify the layout of the altar to make it closer to The Fool and to the King of Yellow and Black.

After busying himself for quite a while, Klein had a new secret deed ritual, but he was unsure if it would work.

He examined it over and over again, and after confirming that there were no mistakes, he emanated his spirituality and heavily replied to Little Sun, "I'm aware.

“I have something to task you with.

“Let’s see if this ritual works.”

...

The Sun Derrick suddenly woke up from his dreamless slumber. Before his eyes were the boundless gray fog and the lofty Fool. His ears echoed with bits of illusory and distant words.

He knew that Mr. Fool would occasionally ask the members of the Tarot Club to make small attempts as if to verify something. He wasn’t surprised by this, and he immediately sat up and began to search for a monster hide, exotic herbs, and other objects.

As for the spiritual materials described in the ceremony, Derrick didn’t waste time heading to the spire or the underground market to buy them. He picked up the Axe of Hurricane and sliced a tiny wound in his arm.

Silently, he used his own blood as ink, and he wrote the name of The Fool and its corresponding symbols and magic labels on the pitted monster hide.

After a while, he put down the quill that was stained with blood. He saw many mysterious symbols on the hide, and the colors were bright red and had an indescribable hint of demonic dealings.

After dealing with the wound on his arm, the pale-faced Derrick quickly finished setting up the altar. He picked up the blood-red word and all kinds of terrifying symbols from the hide and held it tightly in his hand.

He looked at the flickering candle flame in front of him, closed his eyes, lowered his head, and repeatedly recited the honorific names of The Fool, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.”

...

Derrick’s spirituality slowly flowed out and infused the hide, and the words in Jotun and the magic symbols on it quickly brightened. It was a startling crimson color.

At that moment, he, who had already entered into a Cogitation state, was only feeling his psyche gradually dissipate as it floated to an immeasurable height, coming into contact with the grayish-white fog, and the hidden great being.

...

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

Noticing that The Sun had not shown any signs of delay in preparing the ritual, Klein chose to wait there above the gray fog.

Suddenly, he felt the entire mysterious space start to tremble. That motionless grayish white fog started to flow!

The crimson star corresponding to The Sun shined brightly and emitted illusory rays of light like the tide.

These countless rays of light condensed into a blurry figure of The Sun. He was in a supplicating position with his eyes closed and his head lowered, waiting for the moment when he could bond with the great being and gain a miraculous Soul Body experience.

The translucent figure on his body was still tightly coiled like a python, but its head was already tilted back as it looked up. The crystal monocle it wore flashed dimly.

He's searching for the subtle, hidden connection... He should've recognized that this is just a secret deed ritual, but he didn't do anything to stop it. Is he trying to find the connection through it? Klein suddenly came to this realization, and felt the gray fog and the mysterious space above it simultaneously rippling with power!

However, for the time being, Klein couldn't combine these forces with his own spirituality to create a Beyonder effect that could exorcise the evil spirit, unless there was another corresponding ritual.

Clearly, this was impossible. He couldn't maintain two rituals simultaneously!

Klein's eyes quickly swept the area in front of him, and his gaze stopped at the Sun Brooch.

Perhaps I can use it as a "bridge"... Just as this thought flashed through Klein's mind, his right hand grabbed the Sunbirdshaped dark golden brooch.

At the same time, he used his spirituality as a whirlpool to attract the pried power from the mysterious space towards him, making it surge towards the Sun Brooch like a tidal wave.

The quivering above the gray fog became obvious. Little dots of pure light intertwined and swept toward Klein, blending with his spirituality.

The Sunbird-shaped dark golden brooch began to glow with a dazzling brilliance. It grew brighter and denser, and in an instant, drop after drop of a translucent golden liquid began to condense.

The liquid quickly merged together and formed a human figure that was as tall as Klein. It was a golden figure, a sacred figure!

It does work... Sun Holy Water that's created from a higher level of power is closer to a God's bestowment! Klein's heart was filled with joy. He turned his gaze back to the crimson star which symbolized The Sun. He then looked at the figure that was waiting to bond with the great being.

As for the divine figure condensed by the golden Sun Holy Water, it wasn't a result of the Sun Brooch, but simply a manifestation of Klein's subconscious thoughts.

Reaching this step, he had already allowed the golden figure to move forward. Through the illusory crimson star, it merged with Little Sun through the secret deed ritual as it dispelled the "evil spirit" hidden inside his body, as well as giving him a certain amount of knowledge and a miraculous Soul Body experience.

However, Klein didn't have much confidence at that very moment.

The power of the mysterious space was obviously higher than his spirituality, making him unable to smoothly control the power. As such, the power of the golden figure was mixed, chaotic, and

insufficiently coordinated. If he used it as is, the effect was, at most, 10% of what he expected.

As for Amon, who was suspected to be a descendant of the ancient Sun God, he was born into a family of Blasphemers in the Tudor Empire's Fourth Epoch. Even if it wasn't his main body, he was able to successfully hide his identity from the powerful High-Sequence Demon Hunter and the powerful mystical items that protected the existence of the City of Silver. Klein truly didn't have much confidence with the effect only amounting to 10%.

His initial plan was only to give it a try. If it really didn't work, he would temporarily bar The Sun and then reconnect with him when he found a better solution.

However, having come this far, Klein naturally wanted the best outcome and strived to succeed in one go.

Having disguised himself as the godlike Fool, he too had a little pride, and he wanted to keep up his reputation... He gave a selfdeprecating laugh as he prepared to find a way to increase the effects of the golden figure to dispel the evil entity at the last moment.

Of course, I can only waste a few seconds; otherwise, the ritual would be over... Klein's eyes swept over the items on the long bronze table again, thinking only of the words "high level."

Due to his spirituality's intuition as a Seer, his gaze landed on an item.

The Card of Blasphemy, the Black Emperor card!

Of all the items Klein owned, it was the only one that matched the words "high level!"

As for Azik's copper whistle, Klein clearly remembered that it had been completely suppressed when the Blackthorn Security Company faced off with the spawn of the evil god.

However, what the Black Emperor card's "high-level" pertains to is the knowledge contained inside. That's not right, after the owner advances to become a High-Sequence Beyonder, it can produce subtle responses with the Beyonder ingredients that are needed. Furthermore, it also possesses the characteristics of antidivination and anti-

prophecy... In other words, its level isn't low... I don't need to use it for a fight; as long as I can use its "highlevel" to suppress the power of this mysterious space above the fog, and if I can minimize the chaotic and unnatural coordination of the golden figure, that will be enough!

Klein quickly came up with an idea. He reached out his hand towards the Black Emperor card which had its back facing up!

Just then, he noticed a frightening scene through the corner of his eyes.

Within the shadow of The Sun that was formed by the illusory rays of the crimson star, a palm, so shriveled that only skin and bones remained, was suddenly reaching forward. Slowly but firmly, it grabbed at the boundary of the crimson star, giving off a feeling as if it was piercing through reality and entering the psyche domain.

Amon was attempting to use the connection to rip open the boundary and extend his hand into the gray fog!

Whoosh!

For the first time, the endless grayish-white fog was in chaos. The "flowing" from before seemed to turn into waves as gales formed.

Klein's pupils shrank. He no longer hesitated, and he picked up the Black Emperor card.

As soon as he held this item in his hand, he immediately felt that his spirituality was no longer subdued by the power of the mysterious space.

Suddenly, the golden figure became abnormally tall, and on its back, it grew pairs of enormous pitch-black wings. There were a total of twelve pairs!

On each pair of wings, there were dark and bright feathers engraved with many mysterious symbols.

The contrast between gold and black was stark, and the huge figure, driven by Klein, spread its wings to cover the vast dome of the towering palace.

Without a sound, the sacred yet corrupted figure of light and darkness flashed over, overlapping with the manifestation of Little Sun that was formed by the crimson star!

The light and shadows intersected, and a fierce wind blew in all directions. The palm that was so shriveled that it didn't have any flesh, to the point of only having skin and bones left, shrank backward uncontrollably, but it also firmly refused to retreat.

It was like a man falling off a cliff who had extended his hand to grab a bulge, unwilling to let go regardless of what happened.

Whoosh!

In the midst of the illusory and chaotic sounds, light and darkness completely erupted. The shriveled hand finally lost its support, and it plummeted, constantly disintegrating and disappearing as it did.

After a few seconds, the gray fog and the mysterious space above it returned to its previous tranquility, as if no one had stepped inside for thousands of years.

Klein focused again and saw that the blurry figure of Little Sun was no longer entangled with the twisted and incorporeal entity.

Phew! Unable to stop himself, he heaved a sigh of relief. Then, he conjured the contrasting image from before and threw them at the manifested figure of Little Sun in the crimson rays of light, allowing him to fully comprehend them.

...

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick felt both awake and adrift at the same time.

It was as if he could see shadows of ineffable shapes, different colors of light that contained endless knowledge, and a majestic, tall, golden figure looking down upon everything.

This figure stood beside Mr. Fool in the thick gray fog, with twelve pairs of huge, dark, mysterious wings on his back.

Not only did his body and mind become warm and pure, but he also seemed to understand what was called sunlight. He had even figured out Holy Water Creation, as well as the knowledge to exorcise evil spirits.

It also contained images he couldn't understand, such as a towering, hidden pyramidal mausoleum.

In that intoxicating Soul Body experience, it was as if he had returned to his most carefree childhood, to the lands where the sun shone in his imagination, and it was only when everything was gone and the simple furnishings of his room came into view that he snapped back to his senses.

Is this the secret deed ritual as referenced in textbooks? For more than two thousand years, no one in the City of Silver has succeeded before. No one has been able to come into contact with a mighty existence... At that moment, Derrick's low spirits and loneliness lessened. A heartfelt smile beamed on his face.

The Fool's so-called experiment was to confirm whether our City of Silver's environment can perform a secret deed ritual? That wondrous feeling of all that knowledge was the payment "He" gave me? Derrick lowered his head again and said with great respect, "Thank you, Mr. Fool!"

Right at this moment, a grayish-white fog suddenly appeared in front of his eyes. In the center of the fog was a lofty chair. It was the leisurely seated Fool.

Then, Derrick saw himself covered in a transparent, illusory shadow.

The figure wore a black classic robe, a matching pointed hat, and a crystal monocle hung from its face. It coiled around his body like a python!

This... Amon wasn't dead! He evaded the detection of the mystical items and the attention of His Excellency, and he became a parasite on my Spirit Body! Derrick's eyes widened, and he saw himself as he was now, no longer entangled by Amon.

Did Mr. Fool notice him and finish him? Derrick's sunken heart calmed down while cold sweat trickled down his forehead due to the lingering fear. His face, on the other hand, displayed an expression of instinctive reverence.

He subconsciously followed the words described in the mythology course and said, "Praise you, the mighty Mr. Fool!"

...

Somewhere in the deep darkness, a bolt of lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the surroundings.

This was a plain that was filled with ravines, and a bluish black single-eyed giant was wandering about subconsciously

His eyes were lifeless, and his face was covered with traces of rotting pus. Grayish-yellow gas permeated from his body and interwoven in the air, forming many clouds.

And beneath his feet, in the darkest ravine on the plain, there was a figure standing at the edge, overlooking the land below.

With the help of the lightning, a thick and broad grayish-white building could be vaguely seen at the bottom of the ravine.

The figure was dressed in a black classic robe and a pointed cap of the same color. It had curly black hair, black eyes, a broad forehead, and thin cheeks. It looked identical to the phantom Derrick Berg had seen.

He raised his hand and pinched the crystal monocle. Then, he turned his head to the left and looked into the distance.

"As expected..." he suddenly whispered, in the language of ancient Feysac.

After pausing for a moment, the man smiled and said the words, "The Fool."

Before he finished speaking, he had already jumped into the ravine in front of him.

At this moment, the lightning subsided for a second, and darkness completely enveloped the world.

...

After eliminating the fatal threat, Klein returned to the real world, once again feeling the urgent need to advance his Sequence.

The Amon that I eliminated wasn't the main body. If he truly is interested in the mysterious space above the gray fog, he will soon return to the City of Silver. At that time, I wonder if the two legendary mystical items and the three Demon Hunters will be able to stop him...

For a mere clone to be so bizarre and terrifying, one can imagine how powerful his main body is... Therefore, I need to conclude the rest of the Magician principles as soon as possible and, through digestion and advancement, better grasp the mysterious space above the gray... Perhaps, the City of Silver's Shepherd elder will be used. If she really is corrupted by the True Creator...

Klein opened the bathroom door and went down to the first floor while in deep thought.

What about the rest of the Magician's principles? As Klein idly leafed through the newspaper he had finished reading, he thought about the issues that mattered most to him.

He had already considered one point before, and that was the difference between having an audience to cheer for him and not having one. However, just this alone didn't seem sufficient.

With this thought, Klein's thoughts ran wild as he inexplicably thought of something.

When I was still a Seer, being recognized and praised as a true fortune-teller would give me a feeling that the process of digesting the potion had become faster. After I concluded the Seer principles, I began to believe that there was no direct correlation between the views and feedback from others and that they were merely expressions, nothing substantial. If I act well enough, I would naturally be acknowledged, and my digestion would naturally be faster.

That is to say, I had always believed that they were two different responses with the same gains, and not something related to causality.

But now, there's the "choice" of receiving an audience's applause... If it does help me digest the potion, does it mean that some performances really require feedback, and the way that others view me can subtly affect the progress of my potion's digestion?

Hmm, by extension, would the establishment of the Churches by the seven orthodox gods, the spreading of their faith, and the nurturing of their followers partially be a result of this?

...This is truly a sacrilegious thought. I am indeed not a person who sincerely worships gods. I will praise them, but I won't blindly believe in them... Klein quickly adjusted his train of thought as he searched for another angle of attack.

He repeatedly compared the subtle differences between Seer, Clown, and Magician. Gradually, he came up with an idea.

In comparison, does a Magician, who needs to perform, possess the need to take the "initiative?"

Taking the initiative to perform instead of being passive like a Seer or Clown?

From the perspective of fate, it also fits. From a Seer's reverence of fate, a Clown's characteristic of being teased by fate while still maintaining a smile, and finally a Magician who takes the initiative to challenge fate. Even if the result is nothing real or substantial, he will still receive the audience's applause from his deception...

Klein nodded indiscernibly as he planned to make attempts in taking the initiative to perform.

Where should I start? It should be something relatively less dangerous. Uh, I can consider the imprisonment of that vampire named Emlyn White by Father Utravsky...

However, I need to confirm that this group of nonhumans abide by the law and only engage in petty theft at the worst... Where do Emlyn's companions stay on the southern side of the bridge? I can't really remember. I'll have to use divination to jog my memories. Hmm, I'll also confirm how dangerous it is...

Having come to this conclusion, Klein put down the newspaper, got up, and went upstairs.

It had to be said that he didn't have any other motivation to actively involve himself in something that had almost nothing to do with him. It wasn't his personality, but in order to act, he had to force himself to do so.

This is considered rather simple for me. How would a straight male act as a Witch and Demoness of Pleasure? It's no wonder the City of Silver emphasizes that "you're only acting"... Klein suddenly understood the meaning of the admonition.

...

City of Silver, in a dark room at the top of the spire.

Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad, stood in front of a window, staring at the silver city which was shrouded in darkness and lightning.

Those beams of light illuminated his disheveled white hair, revealing his twisted and hideous old scars on his face, as well as the deep wrinkles on his face and his worried eyes.

After an unknown period of time, Colin turned and looked at a dark corner. He asked in a deep voice, “Find anything?”

In the corner, a shadow stood up. It was pitch black as it shot towards the wall, twisting and whirling.

Its voice carried the feeling of metal rubbing against metal, and it was rather jarring to the ears.

“After Derrick Berg returned home, he showed some signs of abnormality, but there was no immediate need to deal with it.”

Colin nodded slightly and said, “What did he do?”

With the help of the mystical item at the bottom of the spire, the Rampager and the clone of the mysterious figure were eliminated. However, he had constantly suspected that the matter had not been completely resolved.

The former captain of the exploratory team suddenly lost control. The mysterious person recklessly took action after enduring for a full forty-two years, without any consideration for the traps or the consequences... All of this made Colin, who had killed and hunted many monsters, instinctively feel that something was amiss.

Therefore, he believed that this was a deliberate choice made by the mysterious man. Although the real purpose of the mysterious man was still unknown, he definitely had some sort of follow-up method, and it wouldn’t be so simple to get rid of him.

After using his Demon Hunter powers and finding no abnormalities, he deliberately pretended to be deceived and directly permitted the youth named Derrick Berg to return home. However, he had secretly sent someone to monitor the situation closely.

This was completely different from the detention and observation method which Colin had used in the past. It was a change he had no choice but to make.

The black shadow that was slightly gyrating replied, “After he entered the room, he sat on the edge of the bed and muttered to himself for quite a while. As I was afraid that the mysterious man would discover me, I didn’t get too close, so I couldn’t clearly hear what was being said. However, I can confirm that this is an abnormal sign.

“After talking to himself, Derrick seemed to become very tired and fell asleep very quickly. But after a short nap, he suddenly woke up and conducted a ritual. I suspect that his mind wasn’t lucid while doing so and that he was controlled by the mysterious man.

“By the way, the ritual had elements of a secret deed.”

Colin pondered for a while and said with a solemn expression, “As expected... Perhaps he was communicating with his main body via this method.

“What exactly is his purpose? Why did he spend his forty-two years at the bottom of the spire in peace?”

The black shadow naturally couldn’t answer this question as it continued, “After the ritual, Derrick no longer showed any abnormal behavior.

“Does this matter need to be dealt with immediately? If that mysterious person’s main body is attracted here, we might not be able to deal with him.”

Colin remained silent for a few seconds before saying, “Continue the observation. That mysterious person has yet to show any substantial malice, so our reaction can’t be too intense.

“Sigh, do you remember that prophecy? It’s almost time for disaster to befall... The further we explore, the more strange ruins we find, and the more dangerous the items we harvest...”

“By your will, Your Excellency.” The black shadow slowly retreated back into the ground and disappeared.

At this moment, in the Berg household, Derrick began to cough so violently that his heart seemed to almost burst.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

He crouched down and coughed nonstop until his throat began to itch, and he coughed out something!

Splat! A translucent object slid across his throat and fell to the ground. It was a worm with the length and thickness of a finger! There were some transparent areas on its body, forming rings.

Derrick had seen something like this at the bottom of the spire previously, and he was certain that he was already free of Amon's influence.

He bent down and picked up the translucent worm, and finally, he was able to count the total number of rings on its body. There were a total of twelve.

What is its use? What can it be used for? It seems to be dead... Derrick lost himself in thought.

...

Winter County in the northern part of the Loen Kingdom.

A black Gothic cathedral towered over the snow-covered mountains as it occupied a vast stretch of land.

In front of it was a cliff, and its surroundings was a vast expanse of whiteness with utmost silence.

This was the Church of Evernight's headquarters, known as the Cathedral of Serenity.

The dark-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell had a black trench coat draped over him as he wore red gloves and walked out of his room.

Having successfully advanced and stabilized himself, he hadn't been given the opportunity to participate in any operations yet, as well as some exercises and so-called mysticism courses.

After going around a corner, Leonard saw a staircase leading down. There, he saw Captain Dunn Smith, with a pair of dark gray eyes and

dressed in a black trench coat, and Klein Moretti, who exuded a bookish demeanor standing there, smiling and waiting.

He tilted his head back and sighed.

My memory has also gotten worse.

I've already forgotten that the two of you no longer exist...

Leonard looked away and walked down the stairs to the first floor of the cathedral. He knocked on the door and entered a small room.

There were chairs in the room, and some Nighthawks wearing red gloves sat around inside.

Leonard found a seat at random and sat down, smiling as he chatted with his friends.

After a while, the high-ranking deacon, Crestet Cesimir, with his propped up collar covering his chin and lips, walked in, sat right in front, and said to the crowd, "Today's class will inform you of things you need to pay attention to.

"As Red Gloves, you will travel to different places, and there's a high chance of encountering dangerous High-Sequence Beyonders.

"If their intent is obvious, and they want to kill you, the only thing you can do is leave a trail behind you so that the subsequent investigators will be able to find the appropriate clues. The exact methods include...

"But most of the time, High-Sequence Beyonders won't always attack you directly. They will utilize you based on all sorts of factors.

"You must be alert enough to not be fooled, and here are a few things that we have summarized.

Sitting in the back, Leonard listened with a smile and great attentiveness. His target for revenge was a High-Sequence Beyonder!

Cesimir paused for two seconds and continued, "In the first case, some High-Sequence Beyonder will pretend to be hidden existences, using promises and hope to deceive you into reciting his corresponding description.

“In the second case, some High-Sequence Beyonders might be restrained in a sealed state. They will act as mystical items that can help you get out of your predicament. For example, a magic lamp that can grant you three wishes or a wishing pond.

“The third case is for a High-Sequence potion named ‘Parasite.’ They often claim that they have lost their bodies and can only survive together with your Spirit Body. They can only rely on you and will not harm you. They will then give you knowledge, formulas, and all sorts of benefits, hoping that you can become powerful so that you can one day help him reconstruct his body or take revenge.

“In reality, the Beyonders with Parasites will only become nutrients for the Parasite; thus prolonging the Parasite’s lifespan and condition.”

As Leonard listened, his smile faded.

The Cathedral of Serenity looked particularly beautiful at night. It complemented the crimson moon high up in the sky that coldly illuminated the land.

Leonard entered his single room, took off his two red gloves, and tossed them onto a wooden table.

With a grim look, he sat in front of the patterned glass window, his back facing out as he bathed in the moonlight.

After ten seconds of silence, he said softly, almost gritting his teeth, "So you're a Parasite!"

Leonard's voice echoed faintly in his own ears, muffled by obvious anger, tension, a sense of loss, and fear.

In the blink of an eye, a slightly-aged voice resounded in his mind.

"You can say that."

"What exactly do you want? Are you a being that's leeching my life through your parasitic means? Or are you waiting for me to become stronger, so you can directly devour my Beyonder characteristic, just like cultivating a humanoid potion?" Leonard's voice was suppressed, but in no way slow.

The slightly-aged voice in his mind laughed.

"I'm your fortuitous encounter; didn't you always think so? You believe yourself to be unique and the protagonist of this era...

"In fact, you aren't acting as arrogant and self-conceited as you usually do. Ultimately, you're wary of me. Hehe. After I taught you the acting method, you didn't even focus on studying it. All you did was a very superficial attempt at it. You wasted a very long time before you digested it and even hid it. You didn't pursue the Nightmare potion.

"It was only after you met with the spawn of the True Creator and suffered a setback were you willing to advance to Sequence 7. Your regret has made you hallucinate.

"Leonard, think about it carefully. Would I not understand the Church of Evernight? When I dealt with them, even the so-called Chanis hadn't even been born yet.

"Would I not know that the Church of Evernight knows of Parasites? Would I not realize that the Red Gloves would grasp certain secrets to prevent the infiltration of High-Sequence Beyonders?

"But did I ever stop you from joining the Red Gloves?"

After a few brief changes in expression, Leonard finally fell silent, saying nothing.

The voice in his mind laughed again.

"Do you feel like you have aged faster than your real age? No, right? I can live for at least another hundred years. I'm not in a hurry to take over my host's life.

"As for your Beyonder characteristics, humph. We aren't even in a similar pathway that allows exchanging. If I swallow it, it would be equivalent to drinking poison, making me half-crazy and increasing my chance of losing control. Do you think that I would do that?

"Evernight is grouped with Giant and Death, while my Beyonder pathway's goal is that of the Apprentice and Seer."

Leonard looked at his body which was illuminated by the crimson moonlight. After some thought, he asked again, "What exactly do you want to do? What is your purpose?" The slightly-aged voice in his mind sighed.

"Didn't I already tell you?

"I've suffered tremendous damage, and I need a host to recover slowly, and I have to hide from a terrible enemy... The Nighthawks, the Church of Evernight, is quite a good choice for a host."

Leonard lifted his head, looked at the ceiling for a few seconds, and said in a deep voice, "Will you be discovered by the archbishops, high-ranking deacons, or other Sealed Artifacts?"

The slightly-aged voice replied leisurely, *"If Parasites were so easily discovered, that high-ranking deacon named Cesimir wouldn't have just given a warning and not send all of you to be checked.*

"Of course, Parasites do leave traces. The Church of Evernight has the means to determine this, but it's relatively complicated and troublesome. It will cause certain losses and substantial danger. It might even affect that Goddess, so before you become a highranking deacon, making you qualified to participate in meetings for the upper echelons of the Church, and interact with Grade 0 Sealed Artifacts, there's no need to worry.

"By then, I should've recovered and embarked on my own journey."

Leonard listened with a serious expression. After a while, he said, "You have a terrifying enemy? Who is he?"

The slightly-aged voice chuckled and said, *"I don't know his name, but I do know his last name..."* "What is it?" Leonard asked.

The slightly-aged voice suddenly became low and deep.

"Amon."

...

The area south of the Bridge, 46 Riverbay Avenue.

The owners of the house that were enjoying their dinner heard the tinkling of the doorbell.

The only maid came to the door, and through the peephole above the door's lock, she saw a policeman in a black-and-white checkered uniform.

She opened the door and asked somewhat fearfully, "Sir, is there anything I can do for you?"

The cop was none other than the disguised Klein, who was attempting to take the initiative to perform. He was here to confirm that the partners of the vampire, Emlyn White, the ones living at 48 Riverbay Avenue, and the people who entrusted Stuart with the mission, were law-abiding monsters.

Yes, law-abiding monsters! Although this doesn't sound right and sounds a little funny, it's how I would react with my true thoughts... Klein emphasized in his heart.

The police uniform he wore wasn't a fake that he specially tailored. It was a product of his ordinary clothes and hallucinatory effects.

A Magician had to do what a magician would do!

Klein didn't monitor 48 Riverbay Avenue because he believed that Emlyn White's companions had long since moved away.

As monsters and non-humans, moving to another residence was the most basic thing to do after a comrade disappears for several days!

They had to suspect that Emlyn White was captured by the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, or other official Beyonder organizations, and it was necessary to assume that he might be dead at any moment.

Therefore, what Klein wanted to do was to perform an investigation by conducting a survey.

He maintained the arrogance of a low-ranking policeman towards an ordinary citizen. Without taking off his hat, he slightly raised his chin and said, "I have something to ask your master."

The maid entered in a fluster and quickly brought back a man in his thirties wearing a thick shirt.

"Officer, what would you like to ask me?" the man asked nervously.

Klein stood at the door and looked inside.

"Do you know the residents of Unit 48?"

"I do." The male owner was stunned for a moment before asking, "What happened to them?"

"They're involved in a case. You have to tell me everything you know," Klein said with a straight face.

His face was also disguised, augmented with slight hallucinatory effects. It was to ensure that he looked distinct from the great detective Sherlock Moriarty.

The male owner suddenly came to a realization.

"It's no wonder they moved away so hurriedly more than a month ago... Most of the residents of Riverbay Avenue and the neighborhood knew the Whites and their son. He was a handsome but eccentric young man.

"Mr. White is an excellent physician and is good at using all kinds of medicine and bloodletting therapy."

"Bloodletting therapy?" Klein returned with a question.

"Yes, although this has been regarded by many newspapers and magazines as an old medical skill that had no effect, anyone who received Mr. White's treatment were cured. However, Mr. White also said that except for him, the other doctors who practice bloodletting therapy are quacks." The owner gave his viewpoint.

The bloodletting therapy is to accumulate food for themselves, isn't it? The only thing that is useful was the medicine... This vampire family relied on bloodletting therapy to help treat patients while receiving "food" as compensation. If there weren't many patients, or if their blood was very unhealthy, would they consider going to a distant hospital to steal blood from a blood bag and drink it? For such monsters, they really are lawabiding... Klein nodded in understanding.

The emotional color changes in his Spirit Vision told him that the man wasn't lying.

Seeing that the police officer didn't refute him, the man continued, "Mr. White and his wife are very nice people. Although they can't cure those who are seriously ill, they're still pretty good doctors for all the residents who live nearby...

"Was their child, Emlyn, involved in a case? That young man was too silent, as though he looked down on us. He's always hiding at home, and I have no idea what he's doing... Officer, are you hot? It's so cold outside."

He probably just hides in the day and comes out at night... Klein wiped the sweat off his forehead and said, "I've been walking around here all day because of this case!"

Next, according to his designed survey, he learned everything about the Whites and their son.

One family at a time, he knocked on the door, asked questions, compiled answers, and came to the conclusion that the White family was indeed kind, amiable, and law-abiding.

It doesn't seem like a description of a vampire... Klein looked up at the crimson moon which was piercing through the clouds, ready to make a final confirmation.

He removed the hallucinatory effect from his body and started divining.

After making sure there was no danger, he went around to the side and climbed into the house at 48 Riverbay Avenue.

Others might not know who had taken Emlyn White away, ultimately afraid of being followed up by an official "visit" from official Beyonders, but Klein knew what was going on and wasn't worried about a trap.

As he entered the second floor, he used the moonlight to see that the rooms were in disarray. Many things hadn't been taken away. Through these things, he could imagine the haste in which their owners had left.

He even found some precious books on herbs in a study, including some popular countryside folk recipes.

As he walked, Klein entered one of the bedrooms, and shadows came into view.

He jumped in fright, imagining that he had been ambushed. He almost snapped his fingers to light the match that had been thrown outside.

Fortunately, no attacks occurred.

The crimson moonlight shone through the window, covering the entire room. Klein was finally able to clearly see what those black shadows were.

They didn't have any spiritual luster, and they were dolls of varying sizes!

The biggest one was only slightly shorter than Klein. It was a girl wearing a gorgeous long skirt. Her sleeves and collars were covered with lace and ribbons.

This female doll was obviously more like one of wax. Her facial features were vivid and lifelike, and her golden hair and red eyes were alluring and beautiful.

The smallest one was only the size of a normal person's palm. It was a woman wearing silver body armor. She looked valiant and heroic while looking magnanimous and beautiful.

As his eyes swept past each doll, Klein suddenly remembered something.

Under the influence of Roselle, the development of doll art had two trends: one was the adorable type, allowing them to have a change of clothes; while the other strove to be more realistic.

Klein looked around and couldn't help but exclaim, "These dolls are not cheap!

"Don't tell me Emlyn is a vampire who is obsessed with dolls?"

After a thorough inspection, Klein confirmed that there was nothing odd about the White family and that the couple didn't even leave a single strand of hair behind, apparently to prevent anyone from tracking them down using divination.

He returned to the bedroom filled with dolls, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog, intending to use divination to for a final confirmation.

However, before he got down to business, he conjured the female doll who was nearly his height, and just like how he had done a divination for the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in Tingen City, he picked up a dark red fountain pen and wrote a sentence on the yellowish-brown goatskin: "Its origin."

Putting down the pen and holding onto the piece of paper, Klein leaned back in his chair and began to mumble as he slowly adjusted his mental state into a Cogitation state.

After repeating this seven times, his eyes turned dark, and his eyelids drooped as he entered a deep slumber.

In the gray space, he saw the puppet craftsman working with extraordinary concentration. He saw the red-eyed "girl" being placed in the room of dolls and Emlyn White fishing out his wallet with his eyes fixed on her.

Finally, the scene stopped inside the bedroom where Klein was presently located. The proud vampire, Emlyn White, with his hair combed back diagonally, looked handsome but slightly delicate. He sat on the edge of the bed and looked at the doll affectionately, along with all the other dolls of different sizes.

He truly is a fanatic of dolls... Klein opened his eyes and facepalmed.

Soon after, he waved his hand, causing the puppet that he conjured to vanish from the space above the gray fog.

When he was done, he picked up his fountain pen again and wrote another divination statement: “Scenes of death in the last ten years in 48 Riverbay Avenue.”

According to the statements from the residents, the White family had been there for no more than ten years, so Klein was able to lock onto a specific area, and he believed that if the White family were just superficially good monsters who were actually making disappearance cases all the time in order to suck warm, delicious blood, then it was impossible to not have any happen at home.

In a period as long as ten years, there would always be a few accidents as long as they didn’t stop!

After carefully checking the divination sentence, Klein recited it and entered Cogitation again, rapidly falling into a dream.

In the dusky world, his vision was sometimes pitch-black, sometimes dotted with snowflakes, and sometimes splintered. However, no scenes appeared.

This was the result of the divination: nothing!

No one had died in the last ten years at 48 Riverbay Avenue!

By taking into account all the factors involved, it’s possible to make a preliminary conclusion that the White family was a lawabiding vampire family, other than a few instances of petty theft... As Klein looked at the long, mottled bronze table in front of him, he wrapped himself with his spirituality and plummeted into the gray fog.

Returning to the real world, he carefully removed the traces he had left behind and left 48 Riverbay Avenue.

Instead of making his final conclusion, he took a detour to the Riverbay Police Station, where he easily sneaked into the archives by mixing himself in among the thieves and drunkards, allowing them to serve as a foil for his disguise. There, he boldly lit the gas lamps inside.

Then, Klein pulled out the last ten years of missing persons records and paged through them.

From time to time, the police officers on duty would pass by the door, but their eyes didn't notice any light leaking out from the archives.

There's nothing suspicious at all... After an unknown period of time, the black-gloved Klein placed the docket back.

Then, he turned off the gas lamp, took off his hat in the darkness, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed towards the lobby.

On his way back to Minsk Street, Klein took a shower, changed his clothes, sat down at his desk, and spread out the map of Backlund that he had first bought on the steam locomotive.

The first thing he did was find Rose Street, which was on the south side of the bridge where the Harvest Church was located. This was where Father Utravsky was the bishop of the cathedral and had Emlyn White imprisoned in his basement.

Soon after, Klein's gaze moved as he familiarized himself with the names and layout of the surrounding streets.

A performance can't be done too hastily or with an excessive thirst for success. One has to slowly immerse the audience into the act... Klein whispered, unfolding a piece of paper and lowering his pen.

"Dear Detective Stuart,

"I wonder if you've found Emlyn White? I've been keeping an eye out for you lately, and one of my informants told me today that he has seen this man on Tuteva Street in the area south of the Bridge. Of course, he simply said that the person he saw looked similar to the man in the portrait."

...

Putting down the pen, Klein folded the letter neatly, stuffed it into an envelope, and affixed a black stamp worth one penny.

...

Above the vast, boundless Sonia Sea with undulating waves churning beneath it.

The Blue Avenger advanced forward steadily without any signs of shaking.

Alger Wilson sat in the Captain's cabin with a brass sextant in his hand, but his eyes were closed.

Without a sound, a smile suddenly appeared on his face.

I've finally digested it... Alger opened his eyes and raised his hands, causing the surroundings to glow with an azure light.

The azure lights intersected and turned into a huge wave that swept forward.

Alger pressed his hands together, and the wave disintegrated, turning into countless raindrops that fell onto the deck.

After nearly four months, his Seafarer potion had finally been digested!

During this period of time, not only had he spent a long time wandering the seas, completing all the missions assigned to him by the Church, but he had also deliberately sought out new sea routes and sought out undiscovered islands. After a few setbacks, he was finally met with success.

This, in turn, led to the digestion of the potion, allowing him to figure out his principles as a Seafarer.

The core principle involved being intimate with the sea, to masterfully grasp information regarding sea routes and the weather, as well as exploration and discovery!

The always heavy Alger couldn't help getting out of his seat. He paced back and forth in the Captain's cabin, thinking of the future he longed for.

After obtaining the potion formula for the Wind-blessed and finding the corresponding Beyonder ingredients, he would hide his advancement to Sequence 6 from the Church. Then, he would repeat the same process again, striving to become a Sequence 5 Ocean Songster within three years.

During this process, he had to serve as the captain of the Blue Avenger and avoid entering the Mandated Punishers with its complicated social relationship so as to prevent his secret from being exposed...

Once I'm promoted to Sequence 5 and gain sufficient strength, I'll be able to secretly return to that place... Alger subconsciously looked to his right.

His gaze seemed to pierce through the planks of the ship and the vast sea, and onto an ancient and hidden island.

Alger wasn't worried about his future advancement within the Church. Once he fulfilled his wishes, he would be able to fully focus on seeking a higher position in the Church!

At that time, he would continue to disguise himself as a Sequence 7 despite being a Sequence 5 and drink another Windblessed potion!

This would increase his Beyonder characteristics, strengthen him, and slow his digestion, but it wouldn't endanger his own safety.

For the same reason, after Sequence 5 was completely digested, he could imbibe another Ocean Songster and repeat the normal process. This would only push him closer to losing control, but he also had solutions to that.

It was to find a woman to marry and transfer the extra Beyonder characteristics to his children.

After doing this, I'll be able to move closer to the level of a Cardinal and approach the level of a High-Sequence Beyonder! This is my chance in such an era! In his mind, Alger had already sketched out the image of himself wearing the robe of a Cardinal as he occupied a high position in the Church and had many Mandated Punishers under his control.

After being intoxicated for a moment, he withdrew his gaze and regained his senses.

...What follows will increase in difficulty with each step. Fortunately, I have the Tarot Gathering and Mr. Fool. Although there are dangers underlying it as well, any path to improving myself will involve risk!

I have to try to gather those Roselle diary pages as quickly as possible. I should grab the chance to raise a question and understand what that card beside Mr. Fool's hand is—the one which only shows its back.

It wasn't there previously.

Card... Roselle's diary... Could it be the item I'm thinking of?

Alger's eyes narrowed as his pupils constricted.

...

15 Minsk Street. Klein yawned, switched off the gas lamp, and slipped into bed.

He originally had another plan. He had wanted to use divination to grasp the origin of the Biological Poison Bottle and obtain the first three potion formulas for the Sequence from the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic.

But after a busy night dealing with the matter regarding Emlyn White, he felt a little tired and decided to try again the next day above the gray fog.

Just as he lay down and closed his eyes, Klein suddenly felt that something was wrong.

This was the spiritual intuition of a Seer!

It has already been several days since I obtained the Werewolf Beyonder characteristics and the Biological Poison Bottle. It's not like I haven't been in a good mental state during this period of time; yet, I have been repeatedly delaying the divination. This is very abnormal! Klein sat up, carefully thought about it, and recalled a similar incident.

The first time he met Megose, he had wanted to directly use his

Spirit Vision to observe her mental state, but he naturally ended up missing the opportunity due to momentarily being taken aback. It was only at the end that he found out that it was because Megose had an evil god's spawn in her stomach. His spiritual intuition as a Seer had stopped him without leaving a mark, preventing him from losing control and collapsing right on the spot.

It's very similar, and this time, it's even more obvious... I remember that Miss Sharron mentioned that the Rose School of Thought's control over their members far exceeds my imagination. Everyone's body and soul seem to be bound by something, which is also the reason why information regarding the Mutant Sequence is rarely leaked out... They believe in the Chained God... So, when using the Beyonder characteristic of a Werewolf to deduce the corresponding potion formulas, it would directly involve this evil god and bring about consequences that I don't wish to bear? Klein thought about it seriously and felt that there was something suspicious about it.

Back when I divined the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem and the "ear" left behind by the Listener, my spiritual intuition hadn't stopped me... Could it be that the Chained God is stronger than the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator?

Or could it be that "His" nature allows him to restrain the gray fog and even be able to effectively invade it?

Of course, the source of the danger can also be the Biological Poison Bottle...

Thinking of this, Klein, who was always cautious, decided to attempt divining the Biological Poison Bottle tomorrow and see if his Seer's spiritual intuition would stop him.

Chapter 367: Threatening Letter

Tuesday morning, the weather remained as cold as it usually was this season.

Klein tightened the collar of his tweed coat, put on his hat, and pulled open the door.

He was heading to the end of the street, where the mailbox was, to post a letter to Detective Stuart. Since it wasn't that far, there was no need to dress neatly or heavily, but Klein had just recovered from his cold, so he had wrapped himself up thickly just in case.

Perhaps it was because of the strong wind last night, but the air in Backlund was surprisingly good. Klein subconsciously slowed down his pace and enjoyed this rare morning.

As he passed Jurgen's house, he heard the oriel window creak open and instinctively turned to look.

Standing at the window was Mrs. Doris, wearing a black plush hat and a thick grayish-blue scarf. She looked even worse than before, and her body was even more hunched.

"Good morning, Detective Moriarty. Thank you for taking care of Brody. He said you were a good man, didn't you, Brody?" Old Granny Doris bent down and picked up the black cat with green eyes.

Brody used all four of his limbs and struggled in her embrace.

Finally, he jumped down and lightly landed on the windowsill.

But instead of leaving, he circled around and around, nuzzling Mrs. Doris with its head on one side, without even looking at Klein.

Was he being friend-zoned by a cat? Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and smiled sincerely.

"It's a happy deed, and even more delightful news is that you've recovered and have been discharged from the hospital."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he said goodbye and continued to walk down the street with a smile on his face.

He had only taken a few steps when he heard Mrs. Doris call after him.

"When Jurgen comes back, I'll have him pay you!"

...Do I look like I took this mission for the money? The smile on Klein's face suddenly froze. He could only half turn around and wave his hand, indicating that he understood.

When he was far away from Jurgen's house, his expression gradually turned serious, and he sighed faintly.

He had just activated his Spirit Vision to look at Mrs. Doris's aura and found that her situation wasn't too good. It wasn't only because of her old age but also because of the cold weather and bad air in Backlund. All of these had a very bad effect on her lung disease.

Mrs. Doris should be able to make it through this late autumn and winter, but it will be hard to say for the next one, or the next, next one... If she wants to live for a few more years, she would have to move to the south, to the area around Desi Bay... It's a pity that it's likely that Lawyer Jurgen can't afford to do so now... Even I haven't been to Desi Bay... Klein mumbled, came to the mailbox, and stuffed the letter in.

This was the prelude to his performance.

And this evening, he would head to the Harvest Church as a detective and do the rest of the preparations.

After buying a Desi pie for breakfast, Klein returned via his original path and was quite at ease.

Before he got close to the house, he saw an elegantly-decorated carriage parked outside. Two ladies in black hats and a ribbon were anxiously pulling on his doorbell, while the maids and bodyguards were scattered around, as though they were on guard against something.

Mrs. Stelyn... Ma'am Mary... Do they have something to entrust me with? They look very anxious... With the paper bag containing the Desi pie in hand, Klein approached and said with a laugh, "Ladies, it should be time for breakfast."

When they turned back to see Detective Sherlock Moriarty, Ma'am Mary was visibly relieved.

“Mister Detective, you have to help me.”

In Klein’s Spirit Vision, there was nothing fake about her anxiety, nervousness, and fear. Therefore, he nodded his head, pointed at the door and said, “Let’s talk inside.”

As he spoke, he glanced at his landlady, Stelyn, and he noticed that her condition was entirely different from the past two days. She had become very low and dejected, as though she wasn’t interested in anything at all.

What happened to her? Although his landlady liked to show off a little, she’s someone who loves life a lot... Klein took out his key and opened the door.

After entering, before she could sit still, Ma’am Mary impatiently said, “Detective Moriarty, I received a threatening letter!”

Threatening letter? Klein put down the Desi pie, clasped his hands and asked, “What does the letter say?”

Ma’am Mary glanced sideways at Mrs. Stelyn, and seeing that she wasn’t quite as active as usual, she said after some deliberation, “That letter asked me to handle the smoke of the factory impartially when I carry out the atmospheric pollution investigation and to acknowledge their contributions, or else I would end up like the doll that came with the letter...

“The doll’s head was ripped off, and its arms and legs were broken.”

Ma’am Mary seemed to recall the feeling when she opened the letter, and she said with a trembling voice, “This is the first time I’ve encountered something like this. I don’t know if it will become a reality or not. I didn’t know that I would have to experience such cases when I became a member of the

investigation council. I didn’t know...”

Ma’am, perhaps Emperor Roselle once said that there are only two ultimate forms of hatred between people. One is to murder the other person’s parents, and the other is to destroy another person’s means of earning money... Klein solemnly nodded his head and said, “My suggestion is to report it to the police.”

From his point of view, Ma'am Mary was now a member of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. Her status was completely different from before, and the police would certainly not take the threats she received lightly.

Moreover, this involved important the development of a governmental policy and wasn't an ordinary matter, so there was a high probability that the police department would hand the case over to the Church's Beyonder organization in order to solve this case as soon as possible.

Based on Ma'am Mary's status as a follower of the Goddess, the Nighthawks was an inevitable choice.

This way, even if Klein wanted a share of the reward, he didn't want to involve himself in it.

"I've already done so, but it doesn't reassure me." Ma'am Mary pursed her lips and said, "Do you know what they said? They said that threatening letters were formed by cutting the words from newspapers, and the doll could be bought from anywhere. It would be very difficult to find the sender in a short period of time! And they only sent one policeman to protect me! Goddess, is this how they treat a helpless citizen's cry for help?"

Ma'am Mary paused, looked earnestly at Klein and said, "Detective Moriarty, I believe you can help me, not only because of your performance from that matter but also because of Mike's approval, Aaron's praise, and Talim's extolment. And I know you made a great contribution in that serial murder case. Don't worry, I will pay you well enough."

Your words make me happy, but something doesn't seem right...

Unless the police have already been bribed, they would probably transfer the case to the Nighthawks, and with Beyonder means such as divination available, it would be impossible for a letter made up of words from a newspaper to avoid detection. The sender would have either been caught already, or they would have means to interfere with divination... The latter would only lead to a formal and large-scale intervention by the Nighthawks...

No matter what the situation is, it will be different from how the situation is handled now...

Klein didn't answer Ma'am Mary right away, but he carefully analyzed the abnormality of this matter.

The living room suddenly became unusually quiet. The feeling of silence made Ma'am Mary and Mrs. Stelyn somewhat uneasy for some unknown reason.

At some point in time, Klein had fished out a coin and made it bounce and roll between his fingers, as though it were a habit of his to focus his thoughts.

Suddenly, the coin flew up and then fell down steadily onto the palm of his hand, its back facing up.

Klein was surprised. He was divining whether this matter involved danger, but it turned out to have none.

If such a threat really exists, even if the sender doesn't have considerable abilities, it would still result in a certain degree of danger. It's impossible to have none... Is it just a simple threat? Or... Klein suddenly thought of another possibility as he smiled and said, "Ma'am Mary, don't worry. You can go back home in peace. If someone comes to you in the next two days to discuss this issue so as to make it public, allowing the citizens to know the true intentions of those factory owners in order to incite anger among the public, then you will be fine."

The possibility which Klein had just thought of was that the threat was a trap set up by the council so as to incite the public to use their anger, allowing the atmospheric pollution investigation to be carried out smoothly and lead to the subsequent bill which could benefit them.

This would explain why the police are responding in this manner.

"...Why do you say that?" Ma'am Mary asked, frowning.

Klein smiled and replied, "That's what I've deduced."

"And if what you claim doesn't happen in two days?" Ma'am Mary pressed.

Klein said sincerely, “Then I will provide protection.” *In any case, there’s no danger...* he added inwardly.

After comforting and sending off Ma’am Mary, he went above the gray fog to confirm the matter and received the same result as before.

By then, his Desi pie had turned cold...

...

Ma’am Mary returned home with some apprehension and uneasiness, wondering if she should invite Stelyn to stay with her for a few days.

At that moment, her housekeeper informed her that the eldest son of Earl Hall, the chief secretary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council, Mr. Hibbert Hall, had come.

After both of them entered the living room, before Ma’am Mary could even open her mouth to speak, the handsome, blond gentleman spoke first.

“Ma’am Mary, I’ve heard of what has happened to you. It’s a disgrace to Backlund, and even to the whole kingdom, and I’m deeply sorry for it.

“Don’t worry, everyone in the committee will stand with you!”

“Thank you for your concern,” Ma’am Mary responded gratefully.

After a moment of consideration, Hibbert Hall said, “Ma’am, I wish to get a reporter to interview you regarding this incident. I want to tell everyone about what happened to you and how despicable this act is. I want to let everyone see how outrageous those people who have contaminated Backlund’s air are! There’s no sign of repentance!

“Please agree to my request.”

This... It’s exactly as Detective Moriarty described... Ma’am Mary was momentarily at a loss for words.

...

After breakfast, Klein rested for a while. Since he had nothing better to do, he went above the gray fog in preparation to divine the origin of the Biological Poison Bottle.

This time, he didn’t delay it at all.

Chapter 368: Taking Him By Surprise

The stone pillars of the ancient and majestic palace supported the high dome.

Klein sat at the end of the long bronze table, holding a translucent brown bottle. He checked it over and over again, but he didn't sense any danger from it.

Let's begin... He conjured a pen and paper and wrote the divination statement: "Its origin."

Putting the fountain pen away and bracing himself for a blow, Klein glanced at the paper and the Biological Poison Bottle, leaned back in his chair, and entered Cogitation while reciting the statement.

Soon, he entered a hazy gray dream world and saw a dark but spacious room.

There were king cobras, black widows, and other strange plants and animals in the room. It was a messy and harrowing scene.

A middle-aged man in a white coat was standing in front of a long table in the middle of the room. He threw the snake gall and spider venom into the huge black pot that hung from the ceiling.

In the end, he even put in a few items that possessed a strong spiritual luster. For example, they would sometimes disperse into a black gas, and other times condense into dark green lungshaped objects. Otherwise, they would be in the form of a tube containing a clear azure liquid or fiery red eyes...

The air around the black iron pot gradually became viscous. It was gathering towards the center, but it was constantly being pushed aside, making it difficult to achieve its goal.

When the white-robed middle-aged man saw this scene, his brow slowly creased, his expression looked slightly anxious.

He flipped through the black notebook by his side, gritted his teeth, and used a ritual silver dagger to slice open his wrist.

Drops of fresh blood dripped into the black iron pot, seemingly breathing life into its contents instantly. A terrifying suction force

suddenly erupted, sucking in all the viscous air around it. The scarlet blood which had yet to leave his wrist was fully sucked into it.

And that wasn't everything. Regardless of how the white-robed middle-aged man struggled to resist, or how he revealed a terrified expression, he couldn't prevent his body from approaching the iron pot.

His body was stretched, his head was compressed, and amidst his screams, he was eaten, little by little, by the pot.

The hanging specimens, plants, and anything that could move or be moved, all flew into the pot.

Brown fog suddenly filled the room, quietly ebbing and flowing.

By the time it was all over, the room was empty except for the brown, translucent bottle lying quietly in the middle of the clearing.

...

The scene quickly faded away, and the dream world shattered. Klein opened his eyes and muttered to himself, *So the Biological Poison Bottle is a product of a death-seeking experiment.*

I thought it was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by some Beyonder... If that were the case, I'd have been able to divine a formula...

To Klein, a Rampager's spirituality and Beyonder characteristic, as well as a spirituality and Beyonder characteristic which was contaminated by an evil god, could all be used to divine a formula. Just like the All-Black Eye which Marionettist Rosago left behind. It was thanks to the isolation effects of the gray fog, and how the mysterious space was able to eliminate negative influences, giving him the ability to court death. Of course, a Beyonder characteristic involved many other additional factors. In theory, the chances of failure were extremely high, but Klein only had the confidence to do so after advancing to Magician.

Similarly, a Sealed Artifact formed by Beyonder characteristics could also be used to divine the formula for a potion.

However, if they were mainly ingredients, then through the production processes and dangerous experiments done by an artisan or other Beyonders, turning them into mystical items, then Klein's divination would be useless at his current state. Even with the enhancement effect provided by the mysterious space above the gray fog, it was useless.

Not bad. At least I don't have to worry about the Biological Poison Bottle having any other latent risks anymore... Klein glanced at the Werewolf fang and wisely abandoned his curiosity.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey continued her study of psychology.

By her feet, the huge golden retriever, Susie, was sitting there, her eyes shining. From time to time, she wagged her tail, as if enjoying the scene.

Psychiatrist Escalante finished the introduction material and deliberately made a casual remark.

"Actually, there is such a theory.

"It's believed that humans would inherit a certain amount of their ancestor's consciousness over the generations; thus, forming the underlying logic of one's behavior patterns. For example, although many people have never seen a poisonous snake, they would instinctively feel afraid and wish to avoid it once they encounter one.

"Why is that? This is theorized to be an instinct that we inherited from our ancestors, something that is hidden in the deepest recesses of our consciousness. In ancient times, people constantly fought with poisonous snakes and all kinds of ferocious animals, and they gradually carved this memory into their consciousness and passed it down."

"How does it get passed down?" Audrey asked with interest.

Escalante, with her long hair which reached her waist, laughed.

"That's a very good question.

“Some people provide explanations that involve a theory that everyone’s consciousness is actually connected at the lowest level. It is one entity, and the traces and characteristics left behind on this entity will affect the consciousness that belongs solely to them.

“For example, the lowest level of consciousness is like an endless ocean. Our unique consciousness would be the islands situated in the ocean and can be split into two parts. One is hidden under the water, which is the subconscious which is higher in both quantity and size; the other is exposed on the surface of the ocean, the superficial consciousness that can usually be detected.

“This is the axiom of this school of thought in psychology.”

Audrey glanced at Susie, stroked the golden fur on its neck and said, “So, we can use this connected ocean to influence the consciousness of others and achieve the goal of curing certain mental illnesses?”

This is the mysticism foundation and Beyonder powers of a Psychiatrist? But it doesn’t seem enough and is lacking something. For example, the sky above one’s head, the sky which shrouds everything? Audrey curiously thought as she wore a look of confused enlightenment.

“You’re really talented in this area!” Escalante praised in delight. “However, we can only affect a portion of the surrounding ocean, and through it, we can affect those who are close to us. If we venture deeper into the ocean, it will be easy for us to lose ourselves.”

She looked up at the ornate and complicated clock on the wall, smiled, and said, “Time’s up, this is the end of today’s class. Miss Audrey, if you’re interested in this psychological school of thought, then we can continue talking about it next time.” “Alright.” Audrey stood up and bowed.

Watching Escalante leave, she nodded in thought.

Ma’am Escalante doesn’t seem like a real Psychiatrist. At most, she’s like me, a Telepathist...

Was what she just talked about the axioms of the Psychology Alchemists?

They really are patient. Why aren't they trying to recruit me yet...

As Audrey was in thought, Susie commented happily from the side, "Audrey, I feel like she's the same type of person as us. No, I mean the same type of dog. No, that's not right... Woof!"

Susie, who only had a rudimentary grasp of the human language, fell into a state of confusion, unable to find the right words to describe her feelings.

...

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, outside the Harvest Church.

Klein, in his normal disguise, looked up at the Sacred Emblem of Life on the facade, held his cane, climbed the steps, and stepped through the main door.

The first thing he had to do was to confirm the situation.

Only by doing this could he perform better so as to ingeniously rescue the vampire, Emlyn White, without garnering suspicion. Then, as a detective who had provided clues, he could receive the gratitude from the White family and gain the applause of an audience.

It was bound to be an interesting performance.

The Harvest Church wasn't big, as it only had a prayer hall. Klein found a spot by the aisle and looked ahead as he took off his hat.

Bishop Utravsky was preaching. His height of more than 2.2 meters, and his burly physique, which couldn't be concealed by his loose priest robes, gave off an extreme sense of oppression.

However, his expression was one of extreme gentleness, filled with appreciation and gratitude towards life.

In front of such a "priest," no one dared to cause a ruckus. The few believers quietly listened, occasionally making prayer gestures unique to the Church of Earth Mother.

Klein watched carefully, waiting patiently, neither conceited nor rash.

As the sermon ended, he gripped his cane and prepared to get up to proceed with his subsequent plans.

At this moment, a man wearing the priest robes of the Church of Earth Mother entered from the door that led to the room at the back of the cathedral.

He looked twenty-eight or twenty-nine-years-old, had black hair and red eyes, possessing a high nose and thin lips. He was handsome but didn't give off masculine vibes. He was none other than Emlyn White.

Klein's mouth gaped a little and nearly failed to close it.

Isn't this guy supposed to be locked up in the basement?

Wasn't he shouting about how determined he was, that he would absolutely not submit to Bishop Utravsky's will?

Emlyn White distributed the communion to one believer after another, and he finally stopped in front of Klein.

Klein's mind whirred, and he immediately in a low voice, "Are you Emlyn White? Your parents entrusted my friend to look for you.

"Why are you here? Did you encounter something? Are you in need of assistance?"

Emlyn White didn't seem to have his unique pride and said with a smile that only looked slightly better than crying, "There's no need; I will be returning home soon."

He pursed his lips, shook his head, and forced a smile, saying, "I am already a believer of Earth Mother, no—a priest."

This answer was completely out of Klein's expectations. For a moment, he didn't know how to respond, and he could only shout repeatedly in his mind: *Hey, you were very adamant about your worship of the moon the last time we interacted at the Harvest Church. You said that you would absolutely not convert to believing in Earth Mother. How long has it been, and you have already given in?*

Isn't that way too fast?

What about your persistence? Where's your moral integrity?

My carefully prepared performance has been forced to end before it has even begun.

Th-this is just taking me by surprise!

Klein opened his mouth and suddenly realized something amiss. *Why is Emlyn White informing me of his conversion?*

I'm just a detective who accidentally chanced upon him while passing by...

Does he wish for me to pass this message to his parents?

Is there another meaning behind this?

While Klein was guessing, Emlyn White put away his worried and smiled smugly.

"You don't have to act, Mister Detective.

"Or should I call you the new owner of the Master Key?

"Hehe, to a noble Sanguine, everyone has a different smell and has different blood characteristics. Even when I was locked up in the basement, I could smell it. I remember your smell."

I've been recognized!

Klein instantly fell into shock as he nearly entered combat mode.

Even if he didn't use his Spirit Vision, he could tell from Emlyn White's tone and words that he wasn't lying. He was very confident and certain.

Just as the tense feelings rose in him, Klein suddenly thought of something.

Why should I worry about that?

Then, he answered his own question in his mind, *So what if I was recognized? The current situation is different from what it was two months ago!*

I was left flustered by the incident with Ambassador Bakerland in front of the official Beyonders. I was rushing around, trying to grasp at every possible straw. In the process, I ended up making contact with Beyonder circles, and even the possibility of me becoming a Beyonder was quite plausible. Therefore, even if my identity as a Beyonder was exposed, they wouldn't think too deeply about it and dig up my past.

And it's very likely that Detective Isengard Stanton is a Beyonder, and he maintains good relations with the police and the official Beyonder organizations. He had speculated that I was the same as him and tried to gently rope me in. In this regard, I can barely be counted as a borderline member of the official Beyonders, and if anything were to happen, I wouldn't necessarily be imprisoned.

More importantly, I have already made my current image so deeply ingrained that I don't have to worry about any wanted posters. If anything goes wrong, then I can just abandon 15 Minsk Street and my identity as Sherlock Moriarty!

So, what's there to worry about?

Yes, before I came here, I had also performed a divination, and the revelation was that there was almost no danger.

As these thoughts flashed across his mind, Klein's contracted pupils, slightly appalled expression, and his fight or flight state eased, as if he was discussing the day's weather with Emlyn White.

Seeing his calm expression, Emlyn White raised his eyebrows, took a few steps to the side, and squeezed past him before slowly sitting to his side.

The vampire looked at Bishop Utravsky, who was leading the believers in the rite of Holy Communion, and he said with a sneer, "Mister Detective, aren't you afraid that I'll go to the police station and shout out loud that you're a Beyonder?"

Similarly, Klein looked forward and said without turning his head, "I'll go with you and shout out loud that there's a vampire!"

Come on, let's have an internecine outcome! Do you think I'm afraid of you!?

Emlyn White's expression stiffened, he raised his right index finger and said, "Sanguine, a noble Sanguine! Got it?"

Before Klein could speak, seeing that Bishop Utravsky was preoccupied with the rites of Holy Communion, Emlyn White chuckled and said, "Regardless, I'm finally going to be free.

"I pretended to submit and told the old man that I was willing to convert to believing in Earth Mother and was deeply penitent for what I had done. Although I have no idea what was necessary to show repentance, it's not a problem to put on an act.

"That old man actually believed me like this, and he was very happy as well. He let me out on the spot, and he let me become a priest here. He told me that as long as I memorized the Holy Bible of the Church of Earth Mother, he would allow me to return home.

"Haha, that old fogey, who's all brawn and has become silly from his faith, sure is easy to fool!"

Easy to fool? Klein turned his head to look at the vampire, looking smug he looked forward and said, "Father Utravsky used to be a pirate, he probably killed far more people than the number of people your father has ever saved. Furthermore, most pirates don't trust their fellow

crew members. Betrayal and trickery are common among them. To be a relatively successful pirate able to live to the end, Father Utravsky wouldn't be a person who's easily fooled, even if he's not a bright person."

Emlyn White wore a look of disbelief as he wished to retort. Klein rubbed the top of his cane and leisurely added, "Father has a powerful Sealed Artifact in his possession; it is known as the Mental Terror Candle. It can allow the wielder to enter the deepest recesses of the target's soul. There, no one can lie. "Moreover, this is only one of its uses. I don't know if it has any other abilities."

Emlyn gradually froze, his eyes losing focus.

After a dozen seconds, he whispered with a pale expression, "When I said I was willing to change my faith, that old man came in with a lantern. There was a candle in the lantern, and I didn't get a good look at it..."

Klein tilted his head and gave Emlyn White a sympathetic glance.

"Perhaps Father Utravsky used it to plant a seed in you, one that gradually and thoroughly makes you wholeheartedly believe in Earth Mother."

The corner of Emlyn's mouth twitched, revealing a smile comparable to a zombie's.

"I don't feel anything at all. It shouldn't be anything like you said.

"Besides, aren't my parents coming? They can blame the priest through ordinary people, saying that he forcefully detained me, forcing him to make a choice between sullying the Church of Earth Mother's reputation and letting me go.

"Isn't that a great idea?"

Klein maintained his look of pity, clasped his hands, and raised them to his nose, acting truly penitent.

"If I were Father Utravsky, I would choose to call the police and have them determine the truth.

“Tell me, who do you think will suffer in the end, the bishop who has the right to preach or a vampire?”

“...Sanguine, Sanguine!” Emlyn White’s facial muscles seemed to twitch.

He clenched his fist and punched the back of the pew in front of him.

“I can wait. Once I memorize the Holy Bible, I will ask the old man to let me return! He is a truly devout person and will not break his promise!”

Klein didn’t turn his head and said with a smile, “I’ve been to 48 Riverbay Avenue. Your parents have already moved away.”

“Naturally. Not only will they move away, they will also move to somewhere I’m not aware of,” Emlyn White responded without hesitation.

Klein added with a relatively relaxed tone, “They moved in a hurry. They left a lot of things behind, such as the things in your room.”

Emlyn White’s expression suddenly became extremely wonderful. He gaped his mouth, abruptly stood up, squeezed past Klein, and rushed towards Bishop Utravsky who stood in front of the Sacred Emblem of Life.

“Father, Bishop, I want to return home, I want to return home, I want to return home!” Emlyn shouted.

Seeing that there were still believers who hadn’t finished their Holy Communion yet, Father Utravsky didn’t respond. He merely gave the pitiful vampire a calm look.

Emlyn quickly shut his mouth and became quiet.

He paced back and forth, looking extremely anxious.

Smiling, Klein stood up, took his cane and hat, and strolled down the aisle to the front pew of the cathedral’s hall.

When Holy Communion was over, he walked up to Father Utravsky and said with a serious expression, “Bishop, I don’t know why you’re

retaining Emlyn here, nor do I want to know. I only know one thing—his parents have entrusted me to take him back."

If this giant-like priest agrees to my request so easily, I can only light a vigil candle for this vampire, Emlyn. No—I'm sure he will hate candles from this day forth. It's best to mourn for him... Klein secretly thought.

Father Utravsky looked down at them and replied gently, "Emlyn can return home at any time."

"..."

Klein gave Emlyn White a glance, raised his right hand, and tapped his chest.

He wanted to gesture the sign of the crimson moon by tapping in a clockwise fashion, but in the end, he forced himself to draw the triangular Sacred Emblem.

Emlyn became rather anxious from the look Klein gave him. Without a word, he rushed to the door of the cathedral and left without a hitch.

Klein followed him at a moderate pace without any signs of anxiety.

After proceeding forward in what appeared like a jog, Emlyn suddenly slowed down and said in a daze, "I feel like I'm starting to miss the Harvest Church, the feeling of memorizing the Holy Bible, and the Sacred Emblem of Life. I wish to return to clean and tidy the place. It'll only take an hour, an hour..."

This planted seed is even more "vicious" than I had imagined. No matter where this vampire goes, he will return to the Harvest Church every day and work for an hour? That's actually quite alright. At the very least, the seed, which was planted, didn't change Emlyn's faith. In a way, he's showing him some respect, but why did I use the word 'respect'... That candle is called Mental Terror Candle, and it's said to be from a dragon. The Spectator pathway is rather scary... Klein tapped his cane and said, "Do you need me to remind you of anything?"

"There's no need!" Emlyn's expression distorted as he angrily said, "I will fight this feeling! I'm going to move to Midseashire or Feysac. I don't believe that I'd still wish to return when I've left Backlund!"

He gritted his teeth and suddenly exhaled.

“Let’s take the carriage back to Riverbay Avenue.”

“Alright,” Klein responded nonchalantly.

After a few steps, Emlyn stopped a rental carriage.

Just as he was about to board the carriage, his back stiffened for two seconds. Then, he said so quietly that Klein could barely hear him, “I don’t have any money on me.” “I do.” Klein smiled.

Emlyn stopped talking and got onto the carriage. Klein sat across him, and as the carriage began to move off, he asked, as if in thought, “Your father is a doctor? One that possesses outstanding skills in drugs and medicine?”

Although he was listless, Emlyn raised his chin out of habit.

“This is the gift that we Sanguine enjoy. The most outstanding potion masters are all from the Sanguine!”

“Is that so...” Klein whispered to himself; his thoughts a mystery.

Emlyn said after a moment of silence, “Write to your friend and tell him that I have returned to Riverbay Avenue. My parents will come looking for me.”

“Alright,” Klein answered simply.

After nearly twenty minutes, the carriage pulled into Riverbay Avenue and stopped in front of Unit 48.

After paying the fare, Klein got out of the carriage and saw Emlyn White look towards the bedroom, his expression becoming abnormally excited.

Restraining himself, the vampire pressed his hand to his chest and bowed deeply at Klein.

“In any case, I must thank you.” Klein immediately revealed a smile.

“There’s no need to thank me.

“The bounty reward of finding you and the transportation fees will be obtained from your parents.

“Also, you have to concoct a medicine with Beyonder effects to help me treat a patient.

“This is the reward that your family should pay.”

Bounty reward, transportation fees, and medicine with Beyonder effects... Emlyn White was left momentarily dazed when he first heard that.

This was not the answer that he had expected.

What about your gentlemanliness? the vampire thought in shock.

As a detective, abiding by clear accounting principles is necessary. Besides, you've even delayed my visit to the Quelaag Club. I don't know what food they've offered in limited supply for the past two days... Klein looked at Emlyn White as he joked and lampooned silently.

After a few seconds, Emlyn forced a smile and said, "I have to see the patient before I can concoct the appropriate medicine."

From your tone, you sound really confident... Klein nodded thoughtfully.

He then thought of a problem.

The White family seems to be a family of outstanding potion scholars. If I were to really be injured and poisoned, then I can come to them for treatment... Wouldn't all of my efforts of going out of my way to get the Apothecary formula from Father Utravsky be for naught? I no longer need to nurture another aide that's good at healing... Reality sure does change faster than a plan...

However, it's not really a waste either. I've already made back my investment from Miss Magician. For things like formulas, as long as it exists, it will always be valuable...

Besides, the White family will definitely stay away from Riverbay Avenue and live their lives with new secret identities. I might not be able to find them, so it's not that convenient...

No, before the Mental Terror Candle's inducing thoughts are resolved, all I need to do is wait for Emlyn White at the Harvest Church...

With this in mind, Klein took off his hat, bowed and said, "No problem, I will take you there when the time comes.

“I shall not waste your time any further. Cheerio.”

Emlyn White’s expression changed as he hesitantly said, “If you can remove the effect of the Mental Terror Candle, then you will receive a greater bounty, and...” He paused and raised his chin. “...and the friendship of the Sanguine.”

I’m a Magician, and I possess the Sun Brooch and Biological Poison Bottle. I’m only limited to mediumship when it comes to the aspect of one’s psyche, so what can I do? Amongst the people I know, only Miss Justice is a close match, but she’s only a Sequence 8 Telepathist... Unless you change your faith to “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era,” then we will be able to find out how to use the knowledge recorded in the Book of Secrets to help you solve this problem through a corresponding ritual... Speaking of which, vampires seemed to be worshipers of the Primordial Moon, very similar to the Shaman King and the like... Could the ancient god recorded in the City of Silver—the Vampire Ancestor, Lilith—be the Primordial Moon?

Klein said with a smile as his thoughts wandered, “I’ll keep a lookout for ways to help you.”

Emlyn White nodded and didn’t say anything else. He impatiently turned around and rushed to the door.

If it wasn’t for the fact that the carriage driver was still nearby, he would’ve spread his black bat wings and soared directly to the second floor.

Klein laughed and shook his head emotively.

He rode back in the same rental carriage and arrived at the steam metro not far away. He then made a transfer and returned to Cherwood Borough’s 15 Minsk Street.

Before entering the room, Klein, who had become accustomed to opening the letterbox, checked for letters.

To his surprise, there really was a letter.

There was no stamp on the letter. It was addressed to Detective Sherlock Moriarty and was signed off with “Jurgen Cooper.”

Lawyer Jurgen? Puzzled, Klein picked up the envelope and tore it open.

Under the light of the street lamp, he saw a piece of paper and two bills.

The denominations of these two notes were one soli and five soli.

A total of six soli... I fed the cat three times during the period... The agreement was two soli per instance... Realizing the reason, Klein opened the door and lit the gas lamp.

As he unfolded the letter, he discovered that it didn't contain much, and the words that Jurgen had handwritten were as precise and serious as he was.

"Dear Detective Moriarty,

"Thank you for taking care of Brody over the past few days. This is the reward you deserve.

"I rang the doorbell twice and found that you weren't at home, so I could only put the payment in an envelope and put it in your letterbox.

"As I might not be able to come back until tomorrow evening, I might miss the verbal agreement which my grandmother promised—tonight.

"As a lawyer, I value the validity of verbal agreements and hope that they will be carried out strictly.

"Finally, thank you once again.

"Jurgen Cooper."

Mr. Lawyer, your gratitude is so dry and boring that it's even inferior to Brody's, but the explanation for your behavior is very detailed. It really fits the Jurgen style... Also, why place it in my mailbox? If this were Earth, in the time before I transmigrated, I might not even look at the mailbox downstairs for months... Klein smiled as he folded the bills and placed them in his pocket. Then, he took out a sheet of paper and wrote to Detective Stuart.

After writing the beginning pleasantries, he wrote after some deliberation:

"...I found Emlyn White at the Harvest Church near Tuteva Street. It's a very small cathedral belonging to the Church of Earth Mother. It isn't very common in Loen... Emlyn White claimed that it was because of certain matters that he chose to run away from home. Afterwards, he was taken in by the bishop of the Harvest Church and stayed there, becoming a..."

Klein thought for a moment before writing down the word "volunteer."

Then he added simply:

"Thanks to my persuasion, he has returned to 48 Riverbay Avenue. However, he might visit the Harvest Church often for volunteer work."

When he was done, Klein read through it, then he put down the pen and neatly folded the letter.

He rummaged around for an envelope, but he didn't affix the corresponding stamp. He planned to hire someone to deliver it directly to Stuart's house the next day.

If he were to go through the Kingdom's postal system, even if he were to put the letter in the mailbox now, he wouldn't be able to get it taken away by the postman until tomorrow, and then there would be the process of sorting and delivering it. So, although he was also in the royal capital of Backlund, Stuart would have to wait at least until the day after next before seeing the letter. Only then would the Whites be notified. And during this period of time, Emlyn White was a penniless guy with only his dolls.

This is also for the sake of receiving payment early... Klein chuckled, tidied up the coffee table, and returned to the second floor to brush his teeth and take a bath.

...

On Wednesday morning, after spending two soli and entrusting a rental carriage driver to deliver the letter, Klein bought some of the main ingredients for Desi seafood rice, intending to cook fried rice today.

He couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva when he thought of the pearly white rice.

After spending some time, he finally cooked a pot of fragrant fried rice with bacon and black tea after going through all sorts of hassles in the kitchen. It was so delicious that tears almost filled his eyes.

This is truly a moving and nostalgic taste... After eating two large plates of fried rice, Klein sat down on the chair and rubbed his belly.

As Emlyn White's situation had too many twists and turns, his performance had already ended before it had even really begun, and he couldn't achieve the desired goal. Thus, he could only look for another opportunity to take the initiative for a performance.

However, Klein still benefited from this. Failure was also an experience, and it made him understand at least one thing:

Unlike ordinary magicians, my performance not only has aides, but it also has enemies and participants. Their reactions and choices can similarly affect its development. I have to consider all of these elements ahead of time...

This is also a lesson. It's better to be taught a lesson over such a trivial matter than to be schooled when facing important matters...

Klein looked at the empty plate in front of him and contemplated about what other "performances" he could initiate.

After a moment of serious consideration, he realized that there weren't any.

Of course, it wasn't absolute. They were just unsuitable for him to do them now.

For example, Klein had always wanted to take care of that evil spirit in the Fourth Epoch ruins of the Tudor Dynasty. But even if it was Sharron, who had the Scarlet Lunar Corona, and Maric, who had obtained the Rampager Beyonder characteristic of a Wraith, Klein didn't think that they were able to fight against the High-Sequence monster. It was even possible to end up dead before even knowing why.

Taking the initiative to perform isn't equivalent to courting death. It's not about using one's life to perform... Klein warned himself.

There was something else he wanted to do, but he didn't think there was much of a chance.

It was to find the strange child, Will Auceptin, who had brought bad luck to the surgeon, Aaron.

Klein had always been interested in the tarot card which the child possessed, and he wanted to confirm if it was a mystical item.

Unfortunately, this case had already been taken over by the Nighthawks, and Klein didn't want to get involved with his former colleagues.

I'll wait for Dr. Aaron's break time before heading to the Quelaag Club and asking about the progress, and then I'll decide what to do... Klein's thoughts quickly took shape.

According to what he knew, Dr. Aaron was usually free on Friday afternoons and Sundays in which he would play tennis at the Quelaag Club.

Klein had also confirmed one thing through today's Backlund Morning Post. There would be a Beyonder gathering tomorrow night organized by Eye of Wisdom.

I can't sell the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic or the Biological Poison Bottle for the time being. I can't even find someone to turn the former into a mystical item... The High-Sequence Beyonders of the Rose School of Thought are definitely still active nearby, filled with rage. I bet they can't wait to find Sharron, Maric, and their helper before tearing them apart... He had to keep a low profile in this area for the time being... Klein picked up his napkin, wiped his mouth, and began to clear the table.

He had wanted to rest for the day and go to the Quelaag Club for a leisurely day without taking the initiative to perform, but then he recalled the Amon avatar which attempted to penetrate the gray fog, and he recalled the role that the Book of Secrets had played in that harrowing moment.

So Klein lit the fireplace in the living room and brought the Book of Secrets back to the real world. He then concentrated on reading, studying, and taking notes.

Of course, he would later burn the corresponding notes above the gray fog.

It was already noon before he realized it when he suddenly heard the doorbell ring.

After hiding the Book of Secrets, Klein entered the living room and went straight to the door.

The visitor was the thin, bearded Detective Stuart.

He looked at Klein with great reverence and excitement, and he couldn't wait to praise him.

"You really are a great detective with abundant resources and channels. You were actually able to solve this kind of case without any clues!"

...Why do I feel a slight change in my spirituality? It seems like the potion has been digested a little more... In other words, my "performance" still enjoyed some limited success. However, there's only one person in the audience, and only he was fooled into seeing the wonderful outcome... An audience's applause really is effective... Klein was startled before he revealed a warm smile.

"No, it's just good luck. God was watching over me." Klein modestly stepped aside and invited Stuart in.

What he said was the truth, and this matter did involve good luck. Long before Stuart had accepted the mission, he already knew of Emlyn White's whereabouts.

Stewart shivered as he took off his coat and hat and hung them on a rack in the hall.

"The darn weather is getting colder. Perhaps I should try using those coats with cotton stuffed inside them," he said.

"You can't call this cold, right? If you go to the north of Midseashire and live in Winter County for a day, you'll understand what truly low temperatures and true winter are like." Klein chuckled.

Then, he generously asked, "A cup of hot coffee?"

"I would love one." Stuart followed him to the activity room on the first floor. "I've been to north Midseashire, and I know about the cold and the snow there. It was a nice vacation, but Backlund's cold isn't inferior either. It went through my clothes like magic and seeped into my bones. Oh, what a wonderful fireplace!"

Stuart stood in front of the burning fireplace for twenty seconds before he sat down on the sofa. He looked at Klein, who was busy brewing instant coffee, and he said, "I'm going south for a holiday to go fishing at Desi Bay for new year's. What about you? Do you have any vacation plans? We put up with Backlund's air for a year and work hard to save money, all for such a holiday."

"Perhaps, I should head to Desi Bay as well..." Klein said hesitantly. He turned his head to the side of Stuart's face, and for a moment, he seemed to be in a trance.

This involved an agreement.

An appointment with his elder brother, Benson, and sister, Melissa.

"Haha, I'll show you my fishing skills when the time comes." Stuart continued without end, "We still aren't rich enough, otherwise I'd like to travel to Feysac, Intis, and even to the Southern Continent."

After he finished making the coffee, Klein handed the man a white porcelain cup. He took two steps back and sat down across from him.

Holding the cup in his hand, Stuart took two deep breaths of the fragrant and warm steam.

After resting for a few seconds, he put the cup down and said very formally, "According to our agreement, I'll share the reward I received this time with you.

"The Whites gave a total of fifty pounds, and you obviously did more than I did.

"Sherlock, how about thirty pounds? I still have to pay my informants for their work."

Only fifty pounds? A vampire is only worth fifty pounds? Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

But he also knew that it wasn't that the Whites didn't want to increase the bounty; it was because they were worried about giving too much money and scaring the detectives into making unnecessary associations, attracting the attention of the police or some official Beyonder organization.

To the average private detective, a fifty-pound mission was already tempting enough, and Klein had only used seven pounds back then to hire detectives to investigate all the red chimney houses in the whole of Tingen City and the towns along its outskirts.

"In addition, the Whites gave you an extra pound, claiming its for your transportation expenses for the past few days." Looking somewhat puzzled, Stuart produced six five-pound notes and one one-pound note.

Klein reached out to take them, casually checked their authenticity and didn't explain the transportation fees.

Stuart didn't ask any further questions and instead said with a smile, "Apart from Mr. Stanton, you're the best detective I've ever met. Did

you join this profession midway, or have you studied under a great detective prior to this?"

What great detective have I studied under? There's quite a number. There's Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, the forever elementary school student [1]*, and that guy who swindles others in the name of his grandfather* [2]... Klein silently lampooned.

He thought and said, "I come from Midseashire, and I did various jobs before I became a detective."

"That's why you're so rich in knowledge and experience!" Stuart said in enlightenment.

Hey, I'm a bit embarrassed by your flattery... Klein smiled but didn't respond.

Stuart took a sip of his coffee and said, "Sherlock, I hope you can provide me with help in the future if I encounter a difficult case that I'm unable to solve."

My social connections in the detective circles have widened... Klein replied cautiously, "If I have the time when the time comes."

After some idle conversation, Stuart tactfully offered to take his leave, and Klein accompanied him to the door.

After putting on his coat and hat, Stuart was about to open the door and leave when he suddenly turned around and sincerely said, "Sherlock, you live too simply.

"Your talent deserves better coffee."

Ah? Klein was stunned for a moment, but then he immediately felt a bit embarrassed.

He laughed dryly and said, "I can't tell the quality of the coffee.

It's all the same to me."

...

After sending Stuart off, Klein went to the butcher's to buy a few ox bones and some beef. He went to the vegetable shop to buy some

ingredients such as white radish, rounding up all the required condiments.

He wanted to prepare beef bone radish soup for dinner and eat it with the leftover rice. As for noon, he found a random restaurant on the streets and ate a small serving of lamb chop.

After a leisurely afternoon, Klein continued to study the Book of Secrets, and the more he read, the more he realized that he knew little about mysticism.

Fortunately, he had a solid foundation. He quickly grasped many things once he came into contact with them and pondered over them.

In the evening, he smelled the tantalizing fragrance of the beef bone soup, and his Adam's apple bobbed up and down twice.

He heard the doorbell again, as though it was a bugle to signal dinner time.

Gulping down his saliva, Klein walked behind the door and reached for the handle.

The image of the visitor naturally appeared in his mind. It was the handsome but not masculine red-eyed vampire, Emlyn White.

There's no need to rush him at all... What a man of his word... Klein opened the door and smiled.

"Good evening, Mr. White"

Emlyn raised his chin, letting his impatience show in his expression.

He was about to say something when Klein looked at his brown clerical robes and said with a knowing smile, "You just came over from the Harvest Church?"

Who was the one who said he could resist last night?

Unable to maintain his gentlemanly demeanor, Emlyn gritted his teeth and said, "That old man, that old man...

"Dammit, how do I get rid of this inducing suggestion?"

Before Klein could reply, he patted the clothes on his chest and said with a stern face, “Take me to the patient.

“There’s a good dinner waiting for me.”

As he spoke, he sniffed indiscernibly, as if he had smelled something.

Klein picked up his coat and hat without saying another word. “Alright, I’ll take you there now.”

After closing the door and taking a few steps, he cautiously asked, “Do you have a certificate to practice medicine?”

How else am I supposed to convince Lawyer Jurgen to allow Mrs. Doris to take the medicine?

Emlyn looked up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle and said, “I don’t need those papers to prove my abilities.”

Before Klein frowned, he casually added, “It’s too simple. I obtained it easily by going through the process.”

...This tone makes it sounds like he’s rather proud of receiving a certificate for practicing medicine... Klein smiled without a word.

Looking at the wet ground in front of him, Emlyn casually said, “Do you know what I like most about Backlund?” “What?” Klein responded without any curiosity.

Emlyn chuckled and said, “The persistent gloomy sky with fog that blots out the sun. This allows me to go out during the day without feeling too much discomfort.

“It’s great, except for the air.”

In other words, the sun really would deal certain damage to vampires? Fortunately, I thought of this yesterday and didn’t bring the Sun Brooch with me; otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to communicate with Emlyn... Klein seemed to gain an understanding.

As they conversed, they had already arrived outside the Jurgens, and Klein went up to ring the doorbell.

After a while, the door opened, and Mrs. Doris, who was dressed thickly at home, said with pleasant surprise, “Mr. Detective, I wasn’t expecting you?”

Brody the black cat crouched to the side, looking at Emlyn warily, as though it felt that something was amiss about him.

Klein pointed to the vampire beside him.

“I became acquainted with a doctor who’s good at treating lung diseases, so I’ve asked him to come and give you a checkup. Let me do the introductions. This is Dr. Emlyn White.”

“Is that so? You still actually remembered this? What a good child!” Doris happily invited the two inside.

Child... Klein’s mouth twitched, but he didn’t say anything in the end.

On the way into the living room, Emlyn whispered, “The patient’s problems are irreversible. She’s very old and rather weak.

“Even if I give her the medicine, she would only be able to live through this winter. She would pass away in three to five years. “Unless she’s given an immortal potion or the like as spoken in the legends, that’s all that can be done. Or should I turn her into a Sanguine? But at her age, she can no longer endure the changes a Beyonder characteristic can do to her body. Furthermore, my parents and I don’t have any excess

characteristics left.”

Irreversible... Klein was startled and silently sighed.

He said to Emlyn, “Make her the medicine first. We’ll leave that to after the winter.”

“Alright, I have a type of ready-made medicine with me that’s suitable for this kind of situation.” Emlyn didn’t stand on ceremony as he sat down on the sofa.

At that moment, Lawyer Jurgen was walking out of the kitchen as he took off his apron. He asked Klein about the purpose of his visit.

“Dr. White, what do you think of my grandmother’s lung disease?” Jurgen asked seriously.

Emlyn was obviously very experienced in such situations. He first explained the ins and outs of lung disease, and after most of it flew past Jurgen's head, he said, "What she needs most is warm and healthy air. That's my most sincere advice.

"In addition, I have special medicine that she can take for free."

As he spoke, he took out his certificate and a small metal bottle. "Will there be any side effects?" Jurgen asked cautiously.

"No, the only problem is that it can't cure the root of the problem completely; it's just a temporary cure," Emlyn replied in a very professional manner. "If it weren't for Detective Moriarty, I wouldn't let anyone try it."

"Perhaps I can give it a try? Cough..." Mrs. Doris interrupted.

Jurgen glanced at Klein who, having performed a divination prior to this, nodded affirmatively.

"Alright." Jurgen finally made his decision.

He watched warily as Mrs. Doris drank the bottle of medicine and carefully observed her reaction.

There wasn't much change to Mrs. Doris at first, but she gradually began to feel her breathing lighten.

She stood up and bent down to pick up the cat. She happily said, "I feel much better!"

Seeing this scene, Jurgen's usually stoic face had his lips curl up slightly.

However, Klein was thinking about the three to five years.

He curled a smile and sighed to himself.

This can also be considered a type of magic show, I guess. Using Beyonder powers to create fake outcomes to make the audience happy...

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1. Referring to Jimmy Kudo from Detective Conan.

2. Referring to Hajime Kindaichi from The Kindaichi CaseFiles.

After waiting for more than half an hour and confirming that nothing unexpected had happened, Klein and Emlyn White left Lawyer Jurgen's house and proceeded in silence, each of them preoccupied with their own thoughts. Soon, they arrived outside 15 Minsk Street.

The vampire, Emlyn White, put his fist to his mouth, coughed lightly, and said, "The payment has been paid. I hope we won't meet again in the future."

That sounds pretty cool, but Mr. White, have you forgotten something important? Klein smiled politely.

"I will visit Bishop Utravsky every now and then, and I hope you will not be at the Harvest Church when the time comes.

"That way, I don't have to busy myself with finding a way to resolve your psychological cue."

Emlyn White's expression suddenly became very strange. He stayed silent for two seconds before he raised his chin and said, "We have many powerful mysticologists among the Sanguine. I will write to them for help."

After he finished speaking, he pressed his hand to his chest and bowed to bid farewell.

Turning around and taking a few steps, he suddenly slowed down, turned his head, and asked hesitantly, "What were you cooking over here?"

"Beef bone radish soup, with rice and chili peppers from the Feynapotter highlands," Klein said in anticipation as he breathed in the fragrance drifting out from the house.

Emlyn frowned and shook his head.

"Chili peppers aren't things fancied by the Sanguine."

Frankly speaking, it's hard for me to imagine a vampire eating chili peppers. Of course, I occasionally imagine a vampire holding a steamed bun and chewing on garlic and onions... Klein silently

lampooned, pointed to the door, and indicated that he was about to enjoy his dinner.

Emlyn White thought for a second, lowered his voice, and said in deliberation, “Last night, I thought over things for a long time and found out that you actually didn’t do anything, so why are you asking for compensation? That old man would’ve let me leave at any moment.” Klein chuckled.

“No, that’s not how the accounts are done. Your parents assigned a mission to find you, not to save you. In the end, I found you. According to the agreement, the reward should belong to me.

“Besides, if I hadn’t reminded you, you might’ve stayed in Harvest Church for weeks or months before you realized that you were free to leave. Furthermore, you wouldn’t have noticed the seed planted in your mind.”

“Are you hinting that my intelligence isn’t up to par?” Emlyn’s face twisted.

No, I’m saying it directly... Klein smiled but didn’t say anything else. He just opened the door and went straight to the kitchen, his mind full of the clear and alluring soup, the white rice, the soft yet chewy beef, the marrow hidden deep in the bones, the sweet, refreshing radishes with meaty flavors, and the shredded chili from the Feynapotter highlands.

In the spicy-hot shreds, there were also pink rose salt and green parsley leaves.

...

On Thursday morning, as promised, Klein went to the value-formoney coffee shop in East Borough.

Old Kohler, who was still wearing the same thick jacket as before, was sitting in a corner, matching tea that barely tasted like tea with a loaf of black bread.

Klein came in front of him, took out the things he had prepared long ago, and pushed them towards him.

It was payment consisting of two five-soli notes, four one-soli notes, and a handful of copper pennies specially designed to increase the effect of the payment.

Old Kohler stared straight at them for quite a while before finally reaching out his right hand to take them with a tremble.

He looked at the money over and over again, raised his hand to wipe his eyes, and squeezed out a smile.

"At the dock, we carry the heavy goods and do some troublesome cleaning with our feet in the cold and dirty water, only for one soli a day..."

And there was a total of 15 soli here!

Klein listened in silence. A few seconds later, he said, "What have you heard recently? What did you notice?"

Old Kohler put away his payment, took another sip of his tea, pinched the corners of his eyes and said, "I've met a lot of dockworkers, and I've reconnected with friends I used to know when I was a tramp. Some of them have found employment in factories, and some of them have been switching between the workhouse and the parks. Heh, just like how I was in the past.

"Recently, there has been a rumor from who-knows-where that since we believe in one of the seven gods, why don't we directly pray to the Creator of everything? It's said that 'He' didn't truly pass away, and he remains in everyone's body and in all things.

"Praying to 'Him' will result in our redemption. Not only will we enter 'His' kingdom after death, but we will also have a better life before death. For example, we don't need to work so hard, and we can have butter and oily meat every day."

This... Is this some theory the Aurora Order has spread about the Fallen Creator? After what happened to Lanevus, they've begun to pay attention to the poor in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, hoping to use them for certain purposes? I wonder if the three Churches have noticed this... They probably have... Klein tucked a

piece of butter between two slices of toast and took a bite without knowing what to expect.

Old Kohler went on for a while before saying, “Mr. Detective, according to your instructions, I paid attention to the female textile workers. In the end, with the help of the police, their struggles failed, but, heh heh, the leaders became the factory’s supervisors, and a third of them lost their jobs.

“Some of them are actively looking for new jobs, some have become street girls, and some have gone off somewhere. The entire East Borough is in chaos.”

If this was the situation when Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos came to Backlund, he could come to East Borough to kill one or two people every day without anyone discovering or noticing the act... Klein sighed in his heart.

Old Kohler continued to recount what he saw and heard daily before saying, “By the way, Liv’s youngest daughter has gone missing.”

“Liv?” Klein was certain that he had never heard of the name.

Old Kohler then said in realization, “She’s the laundry maid you and Mr. Reporter met last time, the one who was arguing with someone. She was always at home doing the washing with her two daughters, but yesterday, when her two daughters were returning home from delivering the laundry, one of them ended up missing. The younger one, what a pity. She’s been a widow for years, and she has always been counting on her two daughters, and now... Sigh, the police in East Borough definitely won’t look too hard for her.”

Unlucky people tend to meet with even worse situations because they have no ability to resist danger or change their environment... This phrase suddenly flashed through Klein’s mind.

After a few seconds of stone-like silence, he said, “Take me to see them. I’m a detective, so maybe I can help them find her.” “...They have no money,” Old Kohler reminded him.

Klein picked up his hat and cane and said, “I occasionally do volunteer work too.”

...

Cherwood Borough, in the apartment which the two ladies originally rented.

Xio had resumed her life as a bounty hunter, and Fors hastened the pace of her new book, hoping to save the money needed for the Beyonder ingredients required by the Trickmaster potion.

But writing a book wasn't something one could write that easily. Fors scratched her hair irritably and decided to go out for a walk to seek out inspiration.

As she walked, she found that she had unknowingly returned to a familiar place.

Diagonally ahead of her was the Yosifov Clinic, a fairly large private clinic where she had first worked.

After staring at it for a while, Fors thought of the old lady who had guided her into the Beyonder world. She turned into a small alley on the right and took a shortcut to a nearby street.

The two sides of the street had leaves fluttering down the parasol tree. It was a relatively quiet place.

Fors remembered that the old lady lived at Unit 39. Back then, she would occasionally visit personally to deliver medicine, give injections, or even to help with the daily chores.

It's almost been three years. That place should've been rented out again. There might have been several changes in tenants... I still remember when I came to tidy up the items she left behind. I discovered many notebooks about mysticism... Fors walked under the nearly barren parasol tree and slowly approached Unit 39.

As she recalled her past experiences, she gradually gained some inspiration for writing.

At that moment, she saw an old man in a heavy woolen coat and a black half top hat standing in front of Unit 39. He had rung the bell three times.

After a few minutes, seeing that no one was opening the door, the old man with blue eyes shook his head and turned around. He whispered in puzzlement, “Still no one...”

He suddenly noticed Fors who was looking at him from nearby. He hurriedly walked over, gently and urgently smiled, and said, “Beautiful lady, do you live in this district? Do you know Laubero and Aulisa?”

Aulisa? Isn’t that the old lady’s name? There haven’t been any tenants in this house lately? After some deliberation, Fors said, “I don’t know if the Mrs. Aulisa I know is the one you’re looking for. She lived here for a long time, but she passed away three years ago.”

“Passed away three years ago? What about Laubero?” the old man with wrinkles at the corners of his eyes hurriedly asked.

“Her husband passed away even earlier than she did,” Fors answered honestly.

The elder was momentarily stunned before revealing a sorrowful expression.

After a moment of silence, he said, “Thank you, good lady.

“I am the elder brother of Laubero, and I’ve been living in Midseashire all this time. As I haven’t received any letters from them for a long time, I decided to come and pay them a visit.

“Can you tell me what happened to them in the past few years?”

Mrs. Aulisa’s husband’s elder brother... Could he be a descendant of the family she spoke of? Fors suddenly snapped to her senses and replied with a smile, “No problem.

She quickly thought through what she could and couldn’t say.

The elder pointed behind him and said, “There’s quite a nice coffee shop over there.”

...

Klein once again stepped into the humid room of a slightly old apartment in East Borough.

He saw the woman who had quarreled with the street girl last time over her contempt towards her profession. She was standing in a pile of clothes. Her wrinkled face had lost a lot of its spirit, she lost her laborious drive, and she looked lifeless.

As for her eldest daughter, the seventeen to eighteen-year-old girl who was sitting by the bed and washing clothes, she kept sobbing.

“It’s all my fault. I didn’t watch over her properly...

“I shouldn’t have taken her into the secluded alley.

“She even said that she was going to learn a few more words at the free school tonight.

“It’s my fault, it’s all my fault....”

Liv suddenly regained her senses and turned to look at her eldest daughter. She wiped away her sad expression and berated her fiercely, “What are you crying for? Get up and wash the clothes!

“Do you want to starve? Do you plan on not even being able to attend the free school?”

After screaming, she saw Klein and Old Kohler at the door.

“Old Kohler... This is?” she asked doubtfully.

Old Kohler seemed to be a slightly afraid of her ferocity as he subconsciously took a step back.

"Liv, this is a detective, and he w-wishes to help you find Daisy."

Liv's wrinkled, peeling face turned to Klein and said coldly, "We've already made a police report."

Although she was perhaps in her thirties, she looked to be in her fifties.

Klein looked around the room where many wet clothes hung. He vaguely remembered the last time he was here. There had been a thirteen or fourteen-year-old girl, carefully holding a crude homemade iron to iron the clothes which had wrinkled from being hung to dry. Her hands had been covered with burns.

She's the "missing" Daisy... Klein looked back at the laundry maid, Liv, and said in a neutral tone, "Do you believe that the East Borough police will really be looking for Daisy?

"Are you sure the people who caused Daisy to go 'missing' wouldn't cast their sights on your family?

"Do you wish to lose another daughter after losing one?"

When the cruel yet heart-wrenching words reached Liv's ears, the indifferent expression on her face slowly crumbled. She turned agape, but she couldn't say anything. The corners of her eyes gradually turned red.

She abruptly lowered her head and muttered to herself in pain and despair, "I don't have any money..."

The room suddenly became silent. Even the sobbing girl didn't make another sound.

Klein pursed his lips and let out a silent sigh.

"I occasionally do volunteer work, simply to help others. Heh heh, I haven't done so in a long time, so please give me a chance."

"Volunteer work?" Liv lifted her head and ruminated over the phrase.

Klein nodded slightly and answered, “The job will be done pro bono. No, it is not completely free either. Kindness will bring me great satisfaction.

“Since you have no other solutions, why not give it a try?”

Liv was silent for a moment. She raised her hand, which had wrinkled from being soaked in water for an extended period of time, wiped her eyes, and said in a low voice, “Mr. Detective, you... you really are a kind and good gentleman...” Her voice suddenly became choked with sobs.

“...This was what happened—at midday before yesterday, at noon, Daisy delivered a load of washed laundry under Freja’s lead. It was just outside East Borough, and they needed to cross several streets.

“In order to rush back for lunch, Freja had chosen a secluded alley, but a momentary distraction left her realizing that Daisy, who had been following her, was gone.

“She retraced her route but never found Daisy, and Daisy hasn’t come back yet.

“Where did this happen, Freja?”

The girl named Freja had already stood up, her eyes were red and puffy.

She sobbed and said, “Right here, right here in Broken Axe Lane, Mister Detective. Will Daisy be alright?”

“Probably,” Klein replied without much of an expression.

He looked around and asked, “Do you have anything that Daisy often carries? I can borrow a police dog. It has an excellent sense of smell and can be used to find a person based on the lingering scent.”

“...No,” Liv thought for a moment and said with a sad expression.

Freja once again shed tears. She felt as if the situation had turned into one of despair once again.

Suddenly, she blinked and said, “Wait, there’s something.

“Daisy’s vocabulary book!”

“Vocabulary book?” Old Kohler asked.

Liv sniffed and said, “I make Freja and Daisy attend the free school at night. I can keep washing clothes, but they can’t always be doing the same.”

This lady is such a good mother... Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

The free classes offered at night were set up by the three major Churches or some charity organizations. From eight to ten o’clock in the evening, the school would be free of charge and would even provide stationery and a certain amount of paper. It was an education that was need-blind, and it would at most involve some religious knowledge. Klein had heard Old Neil mention that he had once been a teacher for the Church of Evernight for several years.

Because there were very few people who volunteered to be teachers in the free school, a unique teaching method was established. Teachers would arrive early, gather the few students who had the best academic progress, imbue them with the content for that day’s class, and then put them in charge of teaching the different classes. The teachers would supervise, correcting any mistakes. It was called a “tutorial system.”

Corresponding to the free classes were the free organizations such as the technical workers’ workshop, which were truly accessible to the poor, and one of the few outlets to escape from poverty.

Unfortunately, there were too few similar organizations, and it was difficult for them to play a substantial role.

At this moment, the sobbing Freja added, “Daisy liked studying very much. She was made the tutor of her class by her teacher. She would put together the vocabulary words she had copied and hugged them in her bed every day. She would wake up early and go out into the street to recite them under the light of dawn. She’s always found it regretful that there are no street lamps around here...”

As she spoke, Freja rushed back to the bunk bed and took out a stack of crumpled paper from under the tattered pillow.

Due to it being in a humid environment for extended periods of time, the words that were copied on it had already smudged.

The edges of the sheets of paper were worn out, as though they had been turned over and over by someone for a long time.

“Mister Detective, i-is this okay?” Freja handed Klein the socalled vocabulary book, which had no binding at all, and anxiously asked.

“Yes,” Klein answered very simply.

He wasn’t trying to comfort Freja. Although it wasn’t the kind of items Daisy carried around all the time, it was something that had accompanied her all this while. Moreover, it had been projected with Daisy’s strong will. It was excellent for using it as dowsing to seek her out.

He casually flipped through the vocabulary book and said, “Then I’ll start taking action. The earlier I find Daisy, the better.”

Liv and Freja were unable to find words to describe their feelings. All they could do was watch as Klein and Old Kohler leave, repeating the words “thank you,” “thank you, Mr. Detective,” and “thank you, good gentleman.”

After leaving the apartment, Klein turned to Old Kohler and said, “You should pay attention to those female textile workers who lost their jobs, especially those who have neither found new jobs nor become street girls, and pay more attention to those who have gone off to unknown places...

“Pay attention to your own safety. Ask less and listen more. If you do this well, you’ll get a bonus.”

“Alright!” Old Kohler nodded heavily.

He didn’t immediately bid farewell. After hesitating for a moment, he asked with a tone full of expectation, “You’ll find Daisy, won’t you, Mister Detective?”

“I can only say that I will do my best.” Klein didn’t make any guarantees.

Old Kohler sighed and smiled bitterly.

“I’ve lost my child, so I’m very unwilling to see this sort of thing happen...”

He waved his hand and walked towards another street.

Klein left the area at a leisurely pace, wrapping Daisy's "vocabulary book" around the head of the cane and, without attracting any attention, completed a "Dowsing Rod Seeking."

There are results. Towards the northwest... For the time being, It's not possible to confirm if I'm suffering any interference or misdirection... He looked down at the direction in which the cane was going to fall and put out his palm to steady it.

According to the revelation, Klein went all the way out of East Borough and hired a rental carriage.

Half an hour later, the carriage, which occasionally changed directions, stopped at Iris Street, near Cherwood Borough and West Borough. It stopped in front of a house with a vast lawn, a wide garden, a small fountain square, and a marble statue.

At this moment, Klein's cane had fallen down inside the carriage and was aimed straight at that direction!

Through the window, Klein could see the guards patrolling inside the gates and ferocious dogs with their tongues out.

The security inside was quite tight.

More importantly, even without using divination, his spiritual intuition made him sense that there was great danger hidden within!

What is this place? How can Daisy's disappearance involve such a dangerous place? Klein thought for a few seconds, then he told the carriage driver to keep going.

The carriage driver replied with some surprise, "Sir, are you not here to visit Mr. Capim?"

Capim? The name sounded extremely familiar to Klein.

He smiled and asked, "Why do you think so?"

"There will always be people coming out from East Borough who ride in my carriage all the way here. Heh heh, this is the home of the rich and powerful Mr. Capim," the carriage driver casually replied.

East Borough... Capim... Tycoon... Klein suddenly remembered who Capim was.

There were many rumors that he was the leader of a bloody criminal organization which was stained with blood. He was involved in the disappearance of many innocent girls!

And in reality, he was a tycoon who knew quite a few important figures.

Without another word, Klein leaned back against the wall and half-closed his eyes.

The horse carriage slowly moved forward. The luxurious villa was left behind as it disappeared from the window.

...

In a small booth in a coffee shop.

Fors already knew that the old man across her was called Lawrence Nord, who came from Midseashire's Constant City and was a public school teacher.

He didn't know that Mrs. Aulisa's husband was dead, nor that Mrs. Aulisa had inherited his estate and become a Beyonder, much less know that Mrs. Aulisa had left me her relics... Could he also be a Beyonder? Does he have the ability to divine? After taking a sip of Fermo coffee, she organized her words and said, "I was a doctor at the nearby Yosifov Clinic, and Mrs. Aulisa came to see me often. That was when her husband, Mr. Laubero had already passed away...

"...Sometimes I would accompany her by chatting with her and helping her do things like...

"So in the end, she made a will, giving me her savings and cash. She donated jewelry, books, furniture, and other things to a charity. This was done under the supervision of her assigned law firm."

Fors was telling the truth, but not the whole truth.

Lawrence pinched his forehead and said, "What a pity. I don't understand why Aulisa didn't contact me over all those years."

“She didn’t mention your name. She was vaguely dissatisfied with Mr. Laubero’s family,” Fors replied frankly.

Lawrence fell silent for a moment before saying, “Thank you for informing me. It has made me understand certain things.”

“By the way, where are Laubero and Aulisa buried?”

“Grimm Cemetery.” Fors took out a pocket watch and gave it a look before saying, “Mr. Lawrence, I still have things to tend to. I should be leaving.”

Lawrence didn’t stop her. He got up and saw her off.

After sitting down again, he rubbed his temples in distress and silently muttered to himself, *Laubero is dead, and he didn’t leave any children behind, and I don’t know what Aulisa did to his Beyonder characteristic... Richard died at the hands of the Aurora Order... Sam doesn’t even wish to contact us at all, having no interest in shouldering the responsibility of the family name...*

Will the Abraham family slowly disappear like this?

Lawrence sat in the coffee shop booth, unable to stop himself from thinking about the hardships of the Abraham family over the years.

Ever since they had split up into smaller families and settled in other places, the Elder Council's control over the family members hit rock-bottom. A great number of Abrahams refused to advance, in order to avoid the effects of the curse; hence, many of them remained at Sequence 8 or 9. Some didn't even attempt to become Beyonders, wishing to be ordinary people with a certain amount of knowledge so as to live a calm and peaceful life.

The Elder Council believed that this was an act of forgetting the family's honor, but it couldn't be harsh on such actions since it was tantamount to self-destruction.

In such a situation, the upper echelons of the Abraham family began to think of introducing changes. They imitated the master-apprentice inheritance system of the Life School of Thought, and they trained non-family members, hoping that once they advanced to become High-Sequence Beyonders, then they would, in turn, be able to help the Abraham family deal with the curse that had existed for about 1,500 years and find their ancestor, Bethel Abraham, who had vanished in the War of the Four Emperors.

The plan started off smoothly, and the apprentices who didn't have to worry about the curse quickly became stronger and stronger under the Abraham family's meticulous nurturing. Within a short period of ten years, there were several strong Sequence 5 individuals among them, while not a single person among the direct descendants of the Abraham family was Sequence 6.

The trunk was too weak, but the branches were too strong; hence, the seeds of tragedy were planted, and the ambitious apprentices began casting their sights on the powerful Sealed Artifacts that the Abraham family possessed.

Their plot failed, but it also resulted in serious repercussions. All the non-family members at Sequences 6 and 5 were of the opinion that their positions within the Abraham family didn't match their own

strength and that they couldn't be trusted, preventing them from being in possession of certain Sealed

Artifacts.

In the process of going back and forth, with difficult negotiations occurring and compromises between the two parties, an accident happened. One of them, Traveler Botis, was lured by the True Creator into joining the Aurora Order, which led to a terrible disaster.

In this disaster, the upper echelons of the Abraham family were almost completely destroyed. More than half of the few powerful Sealed Artifacts were lost, and only three were left. As a result,

Lawrence's brother, who he shared the same mother with, Richard, died.

Not only did Botis benefit greatly from it, but he also gathered all the Beyonder ingredients he needed, and with the help of the True Creator, he successfully overcame the dangers and became a demigod, becoming one of the five Saints of the Aurora Order, the Saint of Secrets.

After the disaster, the rebuilt Abraham family's Elder Council reflected over the actions of the past few years, but they couldn't find a solution to the problem. Emotions such as negativity, dejection, and hopelessness shrouded the hearts of the few remaining family members.

Lawrence didn't wish to be placed in such an environment or face sighing and repressed emotions every day. He found a reason to leave the Elder Council and came to Backlund to look for his other brothers, Laubero, who he shared the same mother, and Sam, who he didn't share the same mother.

But now, he suddenly realized that he was the only one remaining from his father's line.

He was already nearly eighty-years-old, and all his children had died in the disaster brought about by Botis.

Just recalling the past made him feel sorrow from the bottom of his heart.

The most painful thing was that he couldn't see the hope for revenge, and he couldn't see the dawn of his clan's glory appearing once more.

I'm already very old, and I was also injured before. Unless it's absolutely necessary, I wouldn't dare to use my Beyonder powers anymore, which would cause me to lose control or even cause the curse to descend... What is the future of the Abraham family? Lawrence took a sip of the Fermo coffee and fell into a long silence.

...

Upon returning to her rented house, Fors immediately entered the bedroom and locked the wooden door behind her.

She sat on the edge of the bed, calmed her mind, and whispered the honorific name that represented hope and the future.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"I wish to inform you of what I have encountered today.

"I met the elder brother of the husband of the old lady who made me become an Apprentice. He seems to be a member of a certain family...

"I didn't mention anything related to mysticism, but I'm worried that he has extremely powerful divination abilities and will be able to find out the complete truth..."

...

At this moment, Klein happened to be above the gray fog.

He saw the crimson star that represented The Magician expanding outward, rippling as he heard the stacked layers of prayers.

After figuring out the details, Klein tapped the edge of the ancient table and said to himself silently, *How cautious for her to know to seek help from The Fool.*

Besides, your guess isn't wrong. The corresponding Sequence 7 for Apprentice is Astrologer...

Having recently read the Book of Secrets thoroughly, he had quickly come up with a plan that would help him interfere with divination through rituals.

I have to say, with the Book of Secrets and my advancement to Sequence 7, I'm becoming more and more godlike when above the gray fog. Of course, for the time being, I'm still just an empty shell...

Speaking of which, I've been acting in front of Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man several times, fooling them completely. Why didn't I receive any feedback from my spirituality? The speed at which I digest the potion doesn't seem to be getting faster as a result. Does it have to happen in the real world? Yes, it might be possible that their "applause," as an audience, has been blocked by the gray fog, preventing them from directly affecting me. Just like how the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator are unable to penetrate the gray fog to find this mysterious space...

From the looks of it, the reaction between the gray fog and this mysterious space is very mechanical. It's not sentient enough, and it lacks intelligence... However, to me, this is actually a good thing...

In the midst of his thoughts, Klein turned his knowledge into an ancient piece of goatskin and threw it into the crimson star that symbolized The Magician.

A boundless grayish-white fog suddenly filled the air in front of Fors's eyes, and an illusory yellowish-brown goatskin descended from the sky.

When she saw the information written on it, she suddenly felt at peace.

With Mr. Fool, Mr. Lawrence certainly wouldn't be able to get the correct revelations via divination! Fors sincerely expressed her gratitude and busily prepared for the ritual.

She had seen a lot of instances where evil spirits did harm to others. In fact, she didn't trust The Fool that much, but the curse of the full moon forced her to rely on him.

Regardless of how bad the consequences are, I will just lose my life. Without the help of Mr. Fool, I would've already lost control during the last Blood Moon and become a monster... Every day I live is a day gained. This is all given to me by Mr. Fool, and he can take it back at any time. Well, it's best if he doesn't... Fors took a breath and lit the two candles that symbolized The Fool.

The initial steps of the ritual were no different from those she had mastered before. This continued until the candles were lit and the essential oils, extract, and herbal powder were thrown into the fire.

When the fragrance of a serene etherealness filled the room, a faint, illusory fog covered the entire altar. According to the contents of the goatskin, Fors quickly adjusted her body and mind, entered Cogitation and chanted the corresponding name of The Fool over and over again.

Such monotonous, repetitive behavior allowed the originally calm and relaxed Fors to slowly enter a state where the mind was in deep sleep while her spirituality dispersed. Her entire being felt groggy, but she maintained a strange sense of lucidness. She felt as if her spirit was floating about, constantly moving upwards.

This was similar to the "secret deed" process that was formed with the help of an external object, but it was different in many ways. This was a technique in mediumship and was used to communicate with higher level spirits. At an extremum, it could even allow a Beyonder to travel the spirit world under the pretext of maintaining a special lucidness.

Some Beyonders who specialized in influencing the mind called it "artificial sleepwalking." They could use techniques such as hypnosis to make ordinary people enter this state as well.

In that way, an ordinary person would appear to be in a deep slumber, yet they would be able to answer questions. Although their eyes and mouths were closed, they could detect the presence of various Spirit Bodies around them; thus, completing a certain degree of communication.

The reason why Klein didn't let Fors use the secret deed ritual was that it could only give knowledge or direct effects such as purification or corruption, letting the target's mind gain a wonderful experience. It

couldn't interfere with the divination or other matters done by another person.

Simply put, the secret deed ritual directly affected the target's Soul Body, Astral Projection, Body of Heart and Mind, and Ether Body. The related positive or negative states were removed, and with the artificial sleepwalking ritual, it allowed Klein to do something indirect so as to deal with any outside interference.

In a daze, Fors felt herself drifting back to the majestic old palace above the gray fog, and she saw Mr. Fool sitting high above, looking down at everything.

Klein looked at the image of The Magician projected by the dark red starlight. He unhurriedly picked up a paper figurine that he had found earlier from his trash pile in the corner.

As a Seer who had advanced twice, he had many ways to interfere with the divination of others, so he didn't need to rely on mystical items to help him.

At this moment, due to the effects of the ritual, the mysterious space above the gray fog started to tremble slightly, and some of the power was flowing due to the perturbation.

Klein's left hand pressed the Black Emperor card on the surface of the long bronze table, connecting it with his own Spirit Body and uplifting himself to a higher level. It raised his level just like the previous times he used the Flaring Sun Charm and Azik's copper whistle to solidify his Spirit Body.

Then, with a flick of his right wrist, he threw the paper figurine out.

The paper figurine suddenly expanded in size, and on its back, twelve pairs of black angel wings which were cut out of paper grew out. The feathers were vivid and lifelike.

The paper "angel" pierced through the dark red light and overlapped with the illusory figure of The Magician.

Without any warning, it started to burn and completely disappeared.

The half-awake Fors seemed to see a dignified and majestic angel as it wrapped layer upon layers of pitch-black wings around her!

After an unknown period of time, Fors suddenly awoke from her artificial sleepwalking state. In front of her were only the three candles quietly burning on the altar and the fog that had permeated the entire room. At the tip of her nose was the familiar fragrance of serene etherealness.

Angel... Fors was so lost in thought that she momentarily forgot to end the ritual.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5... I think there were twelve pairs of wings... According to the canon descriptions of the various Churches, that's an angel of the highest rank... Fors tried to recall what she had seen in her reverie. She was both shocked and not that shocked, as if what she had encountered was a shocking event that she had previously taken for granted but had simply never encountered before.

It isn't surprising that Mr. Fool has the services of an angel. From the fact that Miss Justice and Mr. Hanged Man occasionally use the word "Him" to refer to him, one can imagine so. The fact that he's able to isolate the effects of the moon's ravings allows me to infer... However, my request was only to interfere with Mr. Lawrence's divination; yet, "He" actually made an Angel protect me. Isn't this too extravagant? Or is this a routine act for "Him"?

Uh, one more problem. Why are the feathers on the angel's wings black? Does this signify degeneracy or Death? What is the true identity of Mr. Fool? Which great being is "He"? Death who was rumored to have died in the Pale Era? "He" wishes to be reborn through the Tarot Gatherings? Fors suddenly took a deep breath, completely unconcerned that the gentleman named Lawrence would find anything wrong with her through his divination.

On the realization that she had already joined the Tarot Club, she smiled wryly and whispered silently, *I can only do as Emperor Roselle said, "Take things one step at a time..."*

After gathering her thoughts, Fors humbly thanked Mr. Fool once more. Following the normal process of a ritual, she extinguished the three candles' flame and began to clear the altar which was filled with all kinds of items.

...

Above the gray fog, Klein temporarily put the matter of the Abraham family at the back of his mind.

According to his original plan, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the following divination statement: "Daisy's current situation."

Putting the fountain pen away, Klein stacked Daisy's vocabulary book and the piece of paper with the divination statement on it and held them in his left hand.

Then, leaning back in his chair, he entered a state of Cogitation, reciting the words "Daisy's current situation" over and over again.

After seven times, Klein fell asleep, his eyes black with a hint of red before grayness surfaced in them.

One scene after another began to flash. Some were contiguous, some had gaps, and some were completely incoherent.

Klein saw Liv's youngest daughter, a thirteen- or fourteen-yearold girl who persisted despite being repeatedly scalded. She was dragged into a remote alley by a man wearing a heavy jacket and a grayish-black cap after he covered her mouth with a handkerchief from behind.

Another man, who was dressed the same, took her legs, and they lifted her as they quickly walked away.

Their destination was the carriage parked outside the alley.

The whole incident was over in less than two minutes, and by the time Daisy's sister, Freja, returned to search for Daisy, the carriage was already gone.

...

Within the carriage, a sharp, ice-cold dagger was held to the muddleheaded Daisy's face, and lewd threats rang in her ears.

...

The carriage drove into the luxurious villa.

...

Daisy was in a small, dark room, and from time to time, the sound of women's cries, screams, and curses echoed outside.

...

Daisy woke up and cried out for help, but the door was opened, and she was kicked away. The pain made it impossible for her to get up.

She wept as she constantly cried for “Mother” and “Freja.”

...

Klein opened his eyes and realized that the paper he held in his left hand had already been crumpled by his tight grip.

He had established that Capim was the mastermind behind the many disappearances of young ladies and that he was the boss of a criminal organization.

The problem, however, was that the case shouldn’t and couldn’t involve powerful Beyonder forces. At most, there would be a few money-hungry Beyonders at Sequence 7, 8, or 9 that were helping out. It wouldn’t have made Klein’s spiritual intuition give him warnings of intense danger the moment he approached the villa.

Is Capim himself a Sequence 6 or even Sequence 5 Beyonder? However, it’s not difficult for a Beyonder of this level to earn money. There’s no need to do such dirty and complicated matters. He just has to find all the gangs and collect protection fees via a protection racket... It would be easy, and it wouldn’t dirty his hands... Could there be some hidden plot behind Capim’s human trafficking? As he pondered, Klein used the power of the gray fog to restore Daisy’s vocabulary book to its original state.

After a few seconds of silence, he took out another piece of goatskin and wrote a new divination statement: “Saving Daisy is a dangerous matter.”

After reading it carefully twice, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist, letting the topaz pendant fall and hang above the surface of the paper, almost to the point of touching the statement.

After taking a few seconds to compose himself, he closed his eyes and began to recite the divination statement he had just written.

When he finished reciting it, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the pendulum in his left hand.

The topaz pendant was rotating clockwise at a fairly fast frequency and with a rather high amplitude!

This meant that saving Daisy was a rather dangerous act!

However, it isn't one of total despair. There's still a possibility, a significant chance of success, as long as I can seize it... Klein deciphered the revelation from the spirit pendulum.

He leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes, and said with a selfdeprecating smile, *Wasn't I looking for an opportunity to perform?*

This is it!

As a Magician, I have to challenge something of a higher difficulty. Otherwise, I would be called a Trickmaster and not a Magician.

Completing the seemingly impossible, even if the outcome is nothing but an illusion, that's the image of a magician in my heart. As for whether it's one of the principles or not, I still need confirmation...

Klein tapped the edge of the ancient table and quickly made his decision.

To him, the most troubling thing about saving Daisy and dealing with Capim was that he didn't know anything about Capim. He didn't know how many other Beyonders were in the villa or the Sequences and pathways they had.

This made Klein unable to make specific preparations.

And for a Magician, the first principle was: "Never perform unprepared!"

Many seemingly impromptu performances actually involved significant preparations. For example, long periods of practice or thorough mastery of diverting attention away from the situation.

Should I get Miss Justice's help to learn more about Capim's background for my Blessed? Klein seriously considered the options available to him.

However, he quickly rejected this idea.

No, I won't be able to receive detailed information. Although Capim is involved with many powerful figures and the wealthy, it's not something that can be publicized. Miss Justice will, at most, learn of the nobles,

Members of Parliament, or civil servants which he is involved with, but she won't be able to determine how many Beyonders are in his villa, much less the traps or the layout...

Through the clues from these connections, Miss Justice might be able to figure out what I wish to know given a few weeks time, but that's too slow. Rescuing Daisy needs to be done as soon as possible. Any delays will result in a tragedy.

Klein's eyes swept across the surface of the long bronze table and onto the junk pile in the corner. His mind began to formulate an idea.

On the one hand, I can get Miss Magician and her friend, Miss Xio, to investigate Capim's background and determine which

Beyonders he has ties with. The two ladies are very well connected in East Borough, several gangs, and a considerable number of Beyonder circles. On the other hand, I can take action by myself. I can obtain information from the servants or bodyguards that come out from Capim's villa via mediumship.

After finalizing his plan, Klein was in no hurry to get help from Miss Magician. He decided to try doing it by himself first so that he could find out more about the matter in a targeted manner.

In the blink of an eye, his figure disappeared from the towering palace above the gray fog.

...

After lunch, a man wearing a grayish-black cap and a thick cotton coat cautiously left from the back door of Capim's villa. He walked all the way to a crossroad and got into a rental carriage.

"East Borough." He touched the dark red birthmark on his face and instructed the carriage driver.

The carriage began to move, and the man looked out of the window with a bored expression, admiring the beautiful ladies and young ladies on the streets.

"If only we could kidnap them..." The man let his imagination run wild as he revealed a regretful expression.

When he was far from Iris Street, he suddenly shivered, and his eyes became slightly dazed.

He knocked on the wall and said to the carriage driver, “Stop, stop! I forgot something. Here will do.”

The carriage driver didn’t dare to reprimand the ferocious man. He didn’t even mutter as he stopped the carriage by the side of the street and allowed him to alight.

After paying six pence for the ride, the man retraced the direction in which he came for dozens of meters before entering a cheap hotel.

Without the need for any proof of identity, he paid for a room.

After entering, he left the door ajar without locking it.

Then, the man sat on the edge of the bed with a deadpan expression. Suddenly, a transparent and illusory figure separated from his body!

It was none other than Klein who was dressed as a worker!

He had used the method of summoning himself to transform into a Spirit Body and had attached himself to this man’s body, allowing him to walk to a convenient location for mediumship!

After knocking the man out, Klein’s spirit form disappeared from the room. Not long after, the door was pushed open, and he walked into the room in his corporeal form.

Using a wall of spirituality to seal the place, Klein quickly set up a mediumship ritual, allowing the alluring scent of Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medicine to emanate in the surroundings.

After finishing his preparations and just as he was about to start the mediumship, he suddenly exclaimed and stopped his actions.

He discovered that the Spirit Body of the man who was unconscious on the bed had a mysterious, unknown restriction. If he forcefully did the mediumship, although there was a high probability of success, it would activate the seal and cause some Beyonder to notice this occurrence!

This would end up alerting the enemy!

Such a strange Beyonder power... Very cautious and very careful... What Capim is involved in isn't simple at all... Klein took a few steps forward, frowning slightly.

He glanced at the unconscious man and suddenly chuckled.

"Do you think you can stop me with just this?"

He quickly suspended the ritual, summoned himself again, and responded to himself.

A few seconds later, he flew out of the candle's flame in his Spirit Body form and floated in the room once more.

Without any hesitation, Klein, in his Spirit Body form, suddenly approached and possessed the unconscious man.

The man suddenly sat up and opened his eyes; his expression appeared lifeless.

He straightened his body, walked to the front of the altar, step by step, and then chanted in a low voice, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era,

"You are the mysterious ruler above the gray fog;

"You are the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

In a room filled with the ethereal fragrance of Amantha extract and Eye of the Spirit medicine, Capim's henchman, who had been possessed by Klein, was made to chant The Fool's honorific name.

Amidst the monotonous yet rhythmic murmurs and the fragrance that made it difficult to focus, the man's Spirit Body gradually dissipated. He became muddleheaded but maintained a certain degree of unusual lucidity, as if he was hypnotizing himself.

With Klein's "help" in his Spirit Body form and the feedback from the chanting The Fool's honorific name, he slowly entered an "artificial sleepwalking" state. His Astral Projection approached the infinitely high gray fog and the mysterious location above the gray fog.

Klein seized the opportunity, ended the summoning, and returned to the towering ancient palace, where he sat at the seat belonging to The Fool.

He saw a bright light circle rippling around him, sketching out the illusory figure of Capim's henchman. The mysterious space was affected by the ritual as it trembled slightly. Some of the energy was being pried away and was slowly flowing.

Klein picked up the Black Emperor card, and a paper figurine flashed in his hand.

With a flick of his wrist, the paper figurine flew out and absorbed the sliver of energy that had been pried out of the gray fog. It then transformed into a man wearing a black cap and a thick cotton jacket. He looked identical to Capim's henchman— even his aura and feel was indistinguishable from the real person.

This paper figurine overlapped with the target's illusory figure and helped him resist the mysterious and unknown restrictions placed within his Spirit Body.

At the same time, Klein held the Black Emperor card and spread his spirituality, touching the projection of Capim's henchman formed by the pure light.

This was one of the applications of secret deeds, where a weak human and a great being were able to be a little in tune with each other, feeling the corresponding knowledge and gaining a wonderful Soul Body experience. Unlike normal circumstances, Klein was playing the role of the great being in this instance.

In this kind of close interactive state that belonged to a secret deed, humans could gain knowledge from great existences, and great existences could also naturally use questions to obtain the information they wanted.

If it wasn't for Klein's inability to master the field of the mind, he would've been able to plant an inducing suggestion.

"What kind of powerful people are in Capim's villa?" Klein asked through the interactive spirituality state.

Without any resistance, the projection transmitted the memories to Klein, making him feel like he was watching a holographic film.

The man in the cap stood respectfully and fearfully in the room. In front of him was a middle-aged gentleman in a black tailcoat and a white wig.

This gentleman had a long, thin, and stern face, and his mouth was naturally pursed, giving off an exceptionally cold feeling.

He followed the golden chain on his watch, took out a pocket watch of the same color, pressed it open to take a look, and then he said in a deep voice, "Look at me."

The man in the cap didn't dare to disobey as he raised his head and looked in front of him.

"Yes, Mr. Harras."

Before he could finish his words, he saw a pair of eyes that flickered with a strange light, and he heard a command: "Maintain secrecy!

"You can't leak anything you see or hear in this villa to anyone else."

The man in the cap trembled inexplicably, feeling that he had to do as the other party had ordered.

He lowered his head again and said, “Yes, Mr. Harras.”

...

The man in the cap carried an unconscious girl along the stairs to the entrance of the basement.

There was a small room that was separated from the others, and a bearded man with an unknown age was sitting inside it.

This bearded man had a pair of frighteningly cold blue eyes. He held a thin piece of flannel in his hand and was carefully cleaning the grayish-white rifle on the table.

The rifle was thick and long, connected through a pipe to a large mechanical box of the same color.

It was a high-pressure steam rifle!

That was a military-controlled item!

“Mr. Belize...” The man in the cap bowed his head in greeting.

...

The man in the cap entered a neatly arranged underground structure which resembled a prison. He then locked the unconscious girl in one of the small rooms.

He locked the door, returned to the corridor, and picked up the lantern he had been assigned.

At that moment, he saw a figure slowly approaching from the other end of the corridor.

The figure seemed to be able to see through the darkness without any lighting.

With the aid of the lantern, the man in the cap realized that it was a woman in her thirties.

The woman was wearing a brown bonnet, a thin white blouse, and suspenders, as well as leather boots that reached her knees.

There were old scars on her face and a cruel smile at the corners of her mouth.

The man in the cap lowered his head in fear as he stammered, “Ma’am Katy...”

The woman ignored him. Step by step, she approached him and walked past him, as though he was nothing more than air.

When the lady named Katy had left, the man in the cap curled his lips and said, “Bitch! When you get into bed, you’ll definitely be more energetic than a prostitute!”

He pushed up his crotch, held up the lantern, and left the basement.

...

The man in the cap met two men in the grand hall that shimmered gold.

One of them was about 1.65 meters tall, and he was a little plump. He didn’t have any special features, but his eyes always had a frightening look. The other was slightly taller than 1.70 meters, and he looked a bit old. He had some wrinkles and a high nose bridge. His brown eyes were filled with spirit, and he didn’t seem to have a look of deterrence.

“Mr. Capim,” the man in the cap greeted the plump middle-aged man, then he said to another person, “Mr. Parker...”

...

In the early light of dawn, the man in the cap met the cold middle-aged gentleman called Mr. Harras at the entrance to the basement.

Harras, wearing a white wig, glanced at him, who was standing respectfully by the side. He indifferently stretched out his right palm towards the entrance of the basement and solemnly said, “Confinement!”

Silently, there was a subtle difference in the surroundings.

...

There are a total of four Beyonders. At least four of them... The strongest should be that Mr. Harras, a Sequence 6 at the very least, or maybe even Sequence 5... I wonder what pathway it is. It does seem similar to the Black Emperor pathway... Relying on order and issuing commands? Judging from the scenes just now, the restrictions pertain

only to the basement, not the entire villa. That's right. With so many people coming and going during the day, it would be too troublesome to enter and exit once the restrictions are in place... I wonder if it's the same at night. Klein analyzed the information he had just received and asked again,

"What's the overall layout of the villa?"

He quickly received feedback and saw a magnificent hall, a wide dining room, connected corridors, washrooms, and scenes of the basement.

Through them, Klein pieced together in his mind the rough layout of Capim's villa.

Feeling the drain on his spirituality, he asked a final question, "Who are the important figures whom Capim is closely related to?"

The scene in front of his eyes was the magnificent hall from before. Half-naked girls were prostrating themselves while serving the guests drinks, letting them abuse them or fool around with them; otherwise, they were being dragged directly to a secluded spot to be ravaged.

They were young, and their faces were bitter and numb. Any slight delay or lack of enthusiasm would result in them being whipped by Capim's attendants or maidservants.

None of these servants showed a shred of sympathy despite seeing such evil scenes. They fought to be the first to showcase themselves in a bid to obtain rewards.

Klein saw Capim among the guests, the cold Mr. Harras, and a Member of Parliament from the House of Commons who often appeared in the newspapers, Vardera, a fat man who was addressed as Deputy Chief...

...

Is that one of the Deputy Chiefs of the Backlund Police Department? That's one of the higher-ups of the police department... To think that not a single one of those servants are good... That's understandable. The villa's hired personnel must've been screened before and would have to be sufficiently trustworthy... Klein rubbed his forehead, halting

the secret deed ritual. The man in the cap was only an inconsequential leader, and that was all he could know or participate in.

Even at this moment, the mysterious restriction on him was still unperturbed.

Klein ended the ritual and allowed him to vanish from above the gray fog as he returned to the real world.

He sat by the bed and looked at the man in the cap who was unconscious. According to the information he had just gathered, he analyzed the feasibility of a performance and considered one plan after another.

In the end, Klein came up with a definite idea. He whispered to himself, *Perhaps, I don't need a helper...*

A helper would drag me down instead, making it inconvenient for me to escape in times of danger.

Picking the right time is very important.

...

Nearly fifty minutes later, the man in the blackish-gray cap appeared in East Borough as he headed straight for the streets controlled by the Zmanger gang.

As soon as he saw a few dark-skinned, lean people with ferocious looks, he immediately went close. Pretending to not watch where he was going, he bumped into one of them.

"Damn it! You bunch of trash!" the man in the cap cursed loudly and punched at one of them.

Highlanders, who loved to fight, didn't back down and entered a brawl with him.

In the process, the man in the cap pulled out his dagger, and the other highlanders also drew their weapons.

Slash!

During the battle, a dagger stabbed into the capped man's neck as he failed to dodge in time. It went right into his arteries.

The man in the cap fell as red blood pooled around his head.

He quickly lost his life, and the illusory, transparent figure within his body immediately vanished.

Klein returned above the gray fog, and using it as a springboard, he re-entered his body. He then opened his eyes in the cheap hotel in Cherwood Borough.

He cleaned up the rest of the evidence and went to the front desk to check out of the room.

On his way back to Minsk Street, Klein once again went above the gray fog.

He wanted to divine a simple but crucial piece of information!

He picked up a fountain pen and wrote down a line of text:

“Capim’s dinner time today.”

Chapter 377: Capim's Dinner

Putting down his dark red fountain pen, Klein picked up the piece of paper with the divination statement and leaned back in his chair.

His lips moved as he whispered, "Capim's dinner time today," over and over again.

Klein's voice echoed above the empty gray fog as his eyes rapidly turned dark, and his eyelids drooped.

In a fragmented dreamscape, he saw the spacious, elegant dining room where there was gilded porcelain cutlery, caviar, roasted chicken, lamb stew, fried rib eye steak, deep-fried Dragon-Bone Fish, thick creamy soup, and so on.

The food was placed in a certain order according to specific requests in front of several diners. Among them was the slightly plump Capim; the middle-aged gentleman in a white wig, Harras; the thin-bloused Katy; and Parker, whose face was rather unintimidating due to his old age.

Looking out from the end of the dining table, he could see a window decorated with gorgeous decorations. Outside the window, the clouds were sparse, and the crimson moon was faintly discernible in the air.

Klein opened his eyes and marked the location of the moon in his dream. Using his knowledge in astromancy, he quickly calculated a rough corresponding time.

It looks like it's from 7:30 to 7:45 in the evening... Considering those few scenes, Capim and the others have already finished more than half their meals, so I can push the time back by another 15 minutes. That way, 7:30 is the best choice... Klein muttered silently to himself as he interpreted the revelation from his dream divination.

Eating at half past seven was not a rare occurrence. This was even considered mainstream in the Loen Kingdom and even the Northern Continent because many middle-class people—either due to their personal situations or because of low rent—lived in the suburbs and had to commute to work by taking the shortdistance steam locomotive.

By the time they got home, it was usually after seven in the evening, so it was normal for people to have dinner between 7:30 and 8:00.

Klein had had the same experience in Tingen City, but that was because he had no servants and no housewife. Once the three siblings returned home, they still needed to busy themselves for quite a while before they could enjoy any hot food. It wasn't because they lived far from work.

This was why civilians and the poor often had dinner between 7:30 and 8:00.

As lunch and dinner were separated by quite some time, afternoon tea, which should've belonged to the upper-class citizens, became popular among the middle-class citizens and civilians.

When he finished the interpretation, Klein recalled the revelation he had just received. Klein became acutely aware of a problem: *Where were Capim's wife and children?*

They didn't appear in the dining room... Is Capim an extreme believer in the Lord of Storms, so his wife and children have to eat their meals in the activity room? Or is there another reason? Or could he be unmarried and childless? He's already a middle-aged man... Klein tried to divine the situation, but he failed to receive any effective revelations, so he gave up.

7:30. He repeated the time once more before returning to the real world.

...

In the evening, even at home, Capim, who was wearing a formal bow tie, narrowed his eyes and looked at his subordinates before him. He asked in a slow but chilling voice, "Fabian is dead?"

"Yes, Boss." Even though he had been working with Capim for many years, his subordinate still felt fear and horror.

"Odysseus, call me Mister. Mister. In a few years, you'll have to call me Sir Capim." Capim loosened his bow tie and casually handled a thick cigar. "When did Fabian die? How did he die?"

“This afternoon, I sent him to East Borough to do something. He ended up in a conflict with the Zmanger gang and got stabbed in the neck...” Odysseus described in a trembling voice.

Capim, who was toasting the cigar, said in an unperturbed tone, “Fabian is really a fool.

“But are the people from the Zmanger gang unaware that he’s my idiotic subordinate?”

“Mister, as you know, highlanders often join the Zmanger gang when they arrive in East Borough, and they’re barbaric and reckless, and they don’t give a shit who’s who,” Odysseus quickly explained.

Capim snorted.

“Have they forgotten that this isn’t the highlands? Or have they forgotten who I am?

“Odysseus, I want the body of the Zmanger gang’s leader from that block. Can you do it? If you can’t, I’ll sink your wife, your child, as well as you into the Tussock River.”

“Mister, no problem!” Odysseus immediately raised his voice.

He immediately asked in a low voice, “Who can I mobilize?”

Capim was about to reply when the door suddenly opened and the middle-aged gentleman with a white wig, Harras, walked in.

He gave Odysseus a cold glance before casting his gaze onto Capim.

“I heard that one of your subordinates had a conflict with a gang in East Borough and ended up dying?”

“Yes, Mr. Harras.” Capim stood up, cigar in hand.

Harras stared into Capim’s eyes and said, “You want revenge on them?”

Capim’s forehead suddenly dripped with beads of sweat.

“No, not at all. Mr. Harras, you misunderstand.”

Harras nodded slightly. “You have to remember that during this critical period, we have to try our best to not cause any trouble unless necessary.”

He paused for a second and observed Capim’s reaction.

“You are not the only human trafficker in Backlund. We can support you, but we can also do so for others. You have to remember this point.

“The reason why I picked you was because you were vicious and shameless enough. However, you were extremely cautious. It wasn’t because you were the biggest human trafficker.”

From the side, Odysseus listened to the duo’s conversation. He wished that he was just a mass of air. That way, he didn’t need to see how humble his boss, Capim, was.

Without a trace of anger on his face, Capim smiled and said, “Mr. Harras, my main concern is that Fabian’s death isn’t simple. It might disrupt your plans.”

“No, there’s nothing wrong with his death,” Harras said in an affirmative tone. “I didn’t get any feedback.”

“Is that so...” Capim acted enlightened. “Then I’m relieved.”

He looked at Odysseus and signaled him to leave. He then lowered his voice and said, “Mr. Harras, this time, there are the kind of goods you like from this batch.”

Seeing Harras’s expression soften but not show any signs of emotion, Capim quickly added, “We’ve already finished gathering the ones that will be sent over.” Harras nodded slowly.

“Send her to my room tonight.”

“Yes, Mr. Harras!” Capim said with a big smile.

After Harras left, his face turned gloomy. He took a deep breath and whispered, “I hope that you can keep your promise this time... I don’t want to be involved in anything like that anymore!”

He clearly remembered that year during the Harvest Festival—someone had come to him, hoping to get a batch of innocent girls.

From that day on, the trajectory of his life had undergone tremendous changes. He had taken a fifth of the market share of the unlawful slave trade.

He quickly became one of Backlund's rather famous tycoons, acquainting himself with several important figures and dragging them into the abyss of depravity.

At this point, he desperately wanted to cover up the sins of his past. He wanted to let "Capim" undergo a catharsis, allowing him to become a true member of the upper-class. However, for the time being, he was unable to do so.

Glancing at the cigar in his hand, he picked up the framed photograph of himself with a beautiful woman and two children.

Rubbing the surface of the photo frame with his thumb, Capim narrowed his eyes and whispered to himself, *After this deal, you should be able to return...*

At dinner time, Capim walked out of his study, a warm smile plastered over his face again.

"Ma'am Katy, there's your favorite caviar and a roast chicken specially prepared for you this evening," he said to the woman in the thin blouse.

Katy touched the old scar on her face and nodded without saying a word.

Capim knew that she was silent and fierce, so he didn't continue. He watched her as she took her seat.

Then Harras, wearing a white wig, entered the dining room, nodding slightly to each of the diners.

The elderly Parker took a sip of his pre-meal wine, smiling as he motioned for Capim to sit down.

The white napkins were spread out, and the food was served one by one. Capim raised his glass and chuckled.

"Holy Lord of Storms, let's toast to a beautiful future." "To a beautiful future," Parker responded.

Harras didn't say a word. He merely held the wine glass in his hand and made a gesture. Katy completely ignored them.

At this moment, the classical clock hanging in the hall read 7:23.

...

In a cheap hotel in the Backlund Bridge area.

The disguised Klein took out his golden pocket watch, looked at the exact time, then he took out Holy Night Powder, and he sealed the room with a wall of spirituality.

After doing that, he quickly set up an altar and conducted a ritual.

"I!"

"I summon in my name:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

...

When the ritual was over, Klein immediately took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog, ready to respond to himself.

Inside the towering and solemn palace, he saw the Door of Summoning condensed by rippling light. It was a pair of illusory doors that opened outwards, covered with mysterious symbols.

Klein was in no hurry to be summoned. Instead, he took out the Sun Brooch and other mystical items, and he absorbed them into his Spirit Body according to his plan.

Finally, he picked up the Black Emperor card and let his Spirit Body envelop it.

All of a sudden, Klein felt as if his Spirit Body had turned corporeal with flesh and blood. It was as if he could lift a gun and move a table and chair!

A dark and ethereal mist rose up around him, and as the mist clung onto the surface of his body, it formed an imposing set of armor.

He had a black crown on his head and a long cape of the same color on his back.

At that moment, Klein was like an emperor about to embark on a journey.

Black Emperor.

He examined the purifying bullets and revolver that he didn't bring with him before taking a step forward and entering the crack on the illusory door.

Leaping out of the candlelight, he immediately flew under the cover of the night towards Capim's villa on Iris Street in Cherwood Borough.

Not long after, he floated in front of the artificial fountain and approached the villa's entrance at a relaxed pace. The patrolling guards passed by him, but they didn't have any reaction. Since it wasn't really late into the night yet, there were no Beyonders on guard outside.

In addition, Klein wasn't afraid that the powerful Beyonders inside would notice and have a premonition.

It was because the Black Emperor card possessed anti-divination and anti-prophecy characteristics!

With a black crown and a solid suit of armor, Klein stood in the doorway, attuned himself for a few seconds, and took a step forward.

His seemingly physical body silently passed through the door and entered Capim's villa.

The first thing that met him was a spacious hall with lots of chairs and clothes racks, and behind it was a magnificent hall with gold as the main color theme.

There was no ceiling, only a dome reaching three-stories high. A giant crystal chandelier hung down, and on each "petal" was a pearly-white candle.

Through a thick, heavy door to the left of the hall was an elegant and exquisite dining room. The fragrance of roasted meat was the richest inside, concealing the smell of alcohol and other food.

Klein was in no hurry to enter the dining room. He partially circled the exterior first, occasionally reaching out his hand to pull on the grayish-white gas pipes. It appeared as if he was experimenting with his physical strength, after carrying the Black Emperor card, to see how much of an impact he had on the real world.

While he was a Seer and Clown, Klein's Spirit Body only had an intuition ability that was separate from divination. He possessed only two spell-like powers, which were to directly attack the soul and to freeze the target through contact. Once he advanced to the Magician Sequence, even if Klein didn't rely on the Beyonder powers of his physical body, he could still use Paper Figurine Substitutes and Air Bullets in his Spirit Body state.

In addition, he began to be able to possess others and gain basic control of the target.

Augmented by the Black Emperor card, the strength of his Spirit Body increased, and the number of items he could carry increased. His spell-like powers, which could directly attack souls, evolved into a Specter's Shriek. It produced sound waves that were inaudible to humans but capable of damaging the souls of all living beings in the area, also

known as Soul Bodies. Similarly, the frozen effects derived from contact was clearly strengthened.

After confirming everything, he found the corner of a wall and penetrated it to enter the dining hall.

Then, suppressing all his emotions, he swept his eyes across the long table.

The scene of Harras in his white wig, Katy in her thin blouse, Parker with his aged face drinking red wine, and the slightly plump Capim slicing his rib eye steak caught his eye.

Klein retracted his gaze quickly, not daring to look too much, lest the few Beyonders would discover him via their spiritual perception.

With the help of the spiritual glows from the male and female servants standing around him, that is—the color of their auras, he carefully circled around the dining room and figured out the exact layout. For example, the size of the dining room was equivalent to the total area of his living room, dining room, and activity room. Another example was that there was a fireplace that burned with charcoal. It warmed the entire room via a pipe. There were sixteen elegant gas lamps, and their lighting mixed together, making the room appear like it was daytime. Across from the fireplace was a wall which had hanging picture frames. There were sketches and oil paintings, all works of famous artists.

That bearded Belize isn't here. He should be changing shifts at the basement... For a Beyonder to be willing to do such menial work, Capim is definitely not involved in a simple matter of human trafficking... Klein thought for a few seconds, then he leaned against an oil painting of the sunset. He reached his hand into his body and unscrewed a translucent brown bottle's cap.

It was the Biological Poison Bottle!

The reason why he paid so much attention to the time and chose to arrive at dinner time was because, at this very moment, the main figures were gathered here in the most orderly manner. It was the most advantageous for him to use the Biological Poison Bottle!

And with the tightly shut doors and windows during early winter, it allowed the effects of Biological Poison Bottle to be more effective and have faster effects!

In addition, Klein didn't soak the Biological Poison Bottle to concoct the "prophylactic" drug before he came. He was currently in his Spirit Body state, so he wasn't afraid of biological poisons!

With his Spirit Body's concealment and containment, he stood there silently and patiently admiring each and every one of the elegant wall lamps which were connected to the grayish-white gas pipes. Quickly, the odorless poison swiftly emanated outwards.

...

Harras, with his white wig, sliced up a deep-fried Dragon-Bone Fish, dipped it in black pepper sauce, and stuffed it into his mouth.

Chewing and swallowing, he picked up the faintly golden champagne that was bubbling like a string of beads and took a sip in a good mood.

He couldn't help but think of the entertainment that he would be experiencing that evening—the joy of a stubborn girl being conquered by him.

This affected his appetite and made him unable to concentrate.

Katy didn't get the servant to help her slice the roasted chicken. She was burying her head, holding a knife and fork, and like doing a precise dissection, she quickly divided the chicken into several pieces. They were all almost the same size.

As Parker sampled the red wine and ate the stewed lamb, he would occasionally chat with Capim, who was sitting at the head of the table, and was considered as a guest that didn't sully the title.

The dinner proceeded in an orderly manner, and finally, Capim put the last piece of beef into his mouth.

He smiled at the three Beyonders and said, "Mr. Harras, Ma'am Katy, and Mr. Parker, tonight's desserts are from La Borrega's head chef. There are three kinds—fruit caramel pudding, cream shortcake, and the carrot cake."

Harras, who had always been cold, nodded slightly.

“We love dessert so much in this country.”

As soon as he finished his reflection, he saw Capim raise his hand and scratch his cheek before scratching again.

“It’s a little itchy.” Capim smiled apologetically.

Before he could finish his sentence, he couldn’t help but scratch one more time, leaving a clear bloody mark on his face.

The bloody mark quickly swelled up, and his skin turned translucent. One could even see yellowish pus inside.

“It’s really a bit itchy.” Capim smiled again.

He scratched the original spot again, but due to using excessive force, the swelling caused the translucent skin to split open, and pus with a nauseating smell sprayed out.

Harras narrowed his eyes and shot to his feet, looking around warily.

“Hahaha.”

“Haha. Hahaha.”

At that moment, he heard exaggerated laughter, and his body suddenly tensed up.

He saw a male and female servant holding onto their bellies, laughing out loud. They laughed so much that they couldn’t even straighten their backs. Tears flowed out from their laughter, their laughter caused the room to turn completely silent.

Like a chain reaction, the rest of the servants fainted or vomited yellow-green liquid continuously without end.

None of them were spared.

Bam! Katy flipped the dining table, letting the gold-plated cutlery and leftover food and wine to spill onto the floor.

She had a revolver and a soft black whip in her hands.

Parker stood up as well, but his mind appeared adrift. He looked at Capim crying miserably for help as he kept scratching and forcefully

tore off a few pieces of flesh. For some baffling reason, he felt that the other party's ugly and disgusting appearance was quite the fine sight.

At that moment, Harras realized that he was a little out of breath and realized that the room was probably filled with poison.

He growled, "Hold your breath!

"Parker, open the door.

"Katy, follow me to find the intruder!"

At this moment, Harras was grateful that the dinner had been enjoyed with Capim, and there were quite a few attendants around.

These ordinary people's ability to resist poison was far inferior to Beyonders. The fact that they showed signs ahead of time had allowed them to detect that something was amiss even before the poison had reached the deepest part of their bodies!

Parker, who has the lowest Sequence, should be the one with the most severe symptoms among us... Harras suddenly had this thought.

Creak!

As Parker opened the door to ensure that the dining room was no longer sealed, Harras, relying on his Spirit Vision, discovered an illusory figure quietly fleeting around.

The figure wore a thick and imposing black armor, and a pitchblack crown on his head. A mask of the same color covered his face, making him look like a king from the spirit world.

It was none other than Klein.

Harras raised his right hand and pointed at the black figure that couldn't be seen by ordinary people. He chanted in ancient Hermes, "Imprison!"

All of a sudden, the black figure's surroundings turned viscous, as though it had transformed into a giant amber or produced a sealed, transparent wall.

The figure was rooted to the spot, hardly able to move. Katy had taken aim long ago, and she pulled the trigger. They worked well together.

With two bangs, the light golden bullet, filled with strange patterns, penetrated the viscous air and hit the black figure.

The bullet pierced through and struck the wall opposite. The black shadow self-ignited, reduced to a roughly cut paper figurine.

Within the pale golden flames, the paper figurine was quickly reduced to ashes.

Pa!

With a strange, crisp snap, the light from the sixteen elegant gas lamps and the fire burning quietly in the fireplace suddenly lit up, leaving Harras, Katy, and Parker with only a brief flash of red before their eyes.

Soon after, all the flames were extinguished, leaving the dining room illuminated via the human-height street lamps outside the window and the crimson moonlight shining through the layers of clouds. It made the place abnormally dark and silent.

Harras and the others once again relied on their Spirit Vision and spiritual perception to search for the ghostly intruder.

At the same time, he realized that the poison wasn't showing its effects fast enough. It wouldn't really flare up until he finished the enemy.

Therefore, he paid attention to the movement at the entrance of the basement. He pointed at the door again and said in ancient Hermes, "Confinement!"

The entire dining room suddenly froze, as if there was an additional layer of an invisible wall that even Spirit Bodies couldn't penetrate.

Harras wanted to make it impossible for the intruder to escape!

I've found you! Wielding the revolver in one hand and the whip in the other, Katy noticed a black figure floating in the air.

A strange light flashed in her eyes, and before she could attack, her mind buzzed as if someone had struck her head with a wooden stick.

She felt as if she had encountered an indescribable shriek. A few drops of sticky blood slowly dripped from the tip of her nose.

Harras only felt slight dizziness while the symptoms of shortness of breath seemed to worsen. Parker, the weakest of them, was seeing stars, and his steps became unstable.

Suddenly, someone patted Parker's shoulder.

A cold and gloomy feeling gushed over, causing him to freeze on the spot. It was as if he was completely covered in ice, and the cold moisture seeped into his bones. A familiar, deep voice sounded in his ears.

"Imprison!"

Parker was instantly trapped by the transparent wall that imprisoned the door. However, Klein didn't possess him and went straight through instead, avoiding the effects of Harras's spell in a timely manner.

Harras narrowed his eyes and waved his right hand.

"Release!"

The invisible prison around Parker's body immediately collapsed, leaving not even a single trace of it behind.

However, he didn't regain his mobility. Instead, he slumped to the ground, shivering continuously, as if he was still frozen.

This wasn't only an aftereffect of Soul Touch, but also the effect of Klein's direct attack on his soul.

Parker, who was only a Sequence 8, was unable to recover in a short period of time. He couldn't even control his breathing and, as a result, inhaled large quantities of the biological poison, which was identical to the one in his body, once again.

His weakened state caused the poison in his body to act faster. His eyes stared blankly as he instinctively changed direction.

He saw Capim rolling on the ground and scratching his face and body constantly. He saw the thin strips of flesh hanging by the side of the wounds and the ghostly white color of his bones.

Parker gasped and struggled to climb over.

Capim, whose itch made him rip off the outer layer of his skin, suddenly discovered that Parker was crawling toward him with bloodshot eyes. He had a bad premonition, but he had no strength to dodge as he couldn't stop scratching. He didn't even have the ability to shout "no," except for using a blood-curdling cry as a substitute.

At this moment, Klein, who had dodged the "Imprison" spell, shouted "Holy" in ancient Hermes. Then, he rubbed his fingers together and shot an Air Bullet through the dark golden Sunbird brooch's coruscating glow.

As soon as the Air Bullet was formed, it took on a holy luster and shot straight towards Harras's face.

This was the Holy Oath provided by the Sun Brooch, and Klein had augmented the Air Bullet with Holy damage!

Harras had long since changed his position. He was abnormally agile, and unlike a mage, he was more like a pugilist expert.

As he avoided Klein's Air Bullet, he motioned for Katy to lash her whip to hold Klein back.

When Klein's attack was interrupted, Harras took an iron-black metal glove from a hidden pocket of his and tried to put it on his left hand.

In his Spirit Body state, Klein didn't need to look out from the corner of his eye to see what had just happened despite not facing Harras. He immediately flew up, avoiding Katy's lash. He flew over the chandelier and pounced towards Harras.

When Harras saw this scene, he held the black metal glove and pointed diagonally upwards.

"Exile!"

Klein was suddenly hit by an overwhelming and invisible force.

His entire Spirit Body was blown away by the wind and hit the wall, the wall conjured by "Confinement," but didn't penetrate through it and escape.

Seizing this opportunity, Harras put on the iron-black metal glove.

In the blink of an eye, he seemed to grow a bit taller. His authority was uplifted like he was a figure that could determine the life and death of others.

The moment Klein was released from the "Exile" state, he felt an inexplicable sense of horror. He couldn't help but want to lower his head, to prostrate, to listen to Harras's every word and obey every order given by him!

His movements had become sluggish, and his pupils reflected a rapidly approaching Katy.

Pa!

Katy lashed out with her long black whip and hit Klein accurately.

The long whip passed through his Spirit Body, but it brought a great deal of pain to Klein's psyche, as if someone had pressed a red-hot iron to the weakest part of his body.

He jerked his head up and let out a scream.

As for Katy, she pulled the trigger of the revolver in her other hand.

Bang! Bang!

Two bullets, with a light golden glow, shot out one after another, striking Klein's body.

Bright rays of light bloomed, and the figure wearing black armor rapidly thinned, turning into a paper figurine and quickly burning into ashes.

Klein appeared in a dark corner, the Sun Brooch inside his Spirit Body was glowing with a dark golden light.

Warm powers instantly filled his body, and the extreme horror that Harras had subjected him to quickly disappeared.

One of the spell-like effects of the Sun Brooch was Horror Immunity!

In the short span of less than a minute, Klein had already been forced to use Paper Figurine Substitutes twice.

Although it was partly because he did it on purpose, it was still enough to prove the strength of Harras and Katy's joint attacks. It was enough to confirm the divination outcome which Klein had received.

This operation would be quite dangerous!

If Parker hadn't been temporarily crippled by the effects of the Biological Poison Bottle and his initial surprise attack, the situation would've been even more dangerous.

His plan was to rationally give up if all four paper figurines were used up and his opportunity had yet to appear. It wasn't because Klein didn't wish to prepare more substitutes, but because his spirituality could only afford four times while in combat.

As for the "Confinement" effect that Harras had created, Klein wasn't worried at all. He was now a Spirit Body that had been "summoned." As long as he ended the "summoning," he would immediately return above the gray fog. Unless it was intercepted by powers at the level of deities or the special effects of Sealed Artifacts at Grade 0 or Grade 1, nothing could interrupt this process.

Previously, when Klein went to the Royal Museum to steal the Black Emperor card, the woman who was suspected of being a High-Sequence Beyonder was unable to stop him from leaving.

This was the main reason why Klein dared to challenge the impossible even though he knew that the danger was great!

Seeing that the enemy was no longer horrified, Harras put on his black metal gloves and signaled Katy to hold Klein back. He then pointed forward and solemnly said, “Specters and wraiths are prohibited here!”

Klein’s body that was covered in black armor immediately trembled as he was strongly repelled by a powerful, invisible force.

However, the level of the Black Emperor card was extremely high, causing the level of the Spirit Body to be relatively high as well. This kind of influence that was directly aimed at a particular existence was quickly suppressed.

Harras narrowed his eyes, feeling that the intruding specter was very strange.

He saw that Klein easily escaped Katy’s intervention via flight, so he pushed his palm forward again and announced in ancient Hermes, “Flying and floating are prohibited here.”

All of a sudden, Klein felt his body become heavy, and he plummeted from midair to the ground. Katy quickly rushed over, and with a flick of her wrist, she lashed out with the whip that directed torture on the mind and soul.

She still had many Beyonder bullets on her, but there were fewer than three that were targeted for specters and wraiths. Therefore, she temporarily gave up on using the revolver and only relied on her auxiliary weapon.

Klein rolled on the ground, skilfully dodging Katy’s whip. He heard the crack of the whip as it hit the ground.

Katy was about to sweep the whip when she felt an itch at her throat. She coughed twice and missed the opportunity to continue her relentless attack.

This was a sign of the poison acting up!

Harras took a deep breath, held his breath once more. He folded his wrist, pointed to himself, and said, “Disciplinary target: wraiths and specters!”

The surface of his body immediately emitted a light as bright as the morning sun. Even his fist began to shine with lustrous brilliances.

Bam!

The marble under Harras’s feet cracked soundlessly, and his tall, thin body pounced swiftly and fiercely, allowing him to immediately close in on Klein.

At this moment, he looked even more like a knight than Katy!

Bam! He threw a punch forward, and the air seemed to explode. However, Klein had pulled back ahead of time, dodging the punch with the wind.

Pow! Katy helped from the side and lashed out with her whip in the direction in which her enemy was dodging.

This forced Klein to have no choice but to roll again and again. He took on a fighting stance while keeping an eye out for Harras’s spell-like “Imprison.”

As lashing sounds echoed, Harras kept attacking while Katy aided him from the side. In less than two minutes, Klein was forced into an unavoidable situation. Even rolling was of no use.

Pa!

Katy’s black whip lashed out at Klein’s face, and he was only able to take one step sideways before being hit in the arm.

That piercing pain attacked his psyche once again, causing him to freeze on the spot. Even his Spirit Body became somewhat thinner.

Seizing this opportunity, Harras clenched his left fist and solemnly declared, “Death!”

His body then merged with some sort of strange force, creating an obvious afterimage as he slammed into Klein.

Schwing!

The figure covered in black armor instantly broke into pieces, turning into pieces of paper that fluttered in the air like a butterfly.

Klein had expended his third paper figurine!

Harras's gaze swept across the room and quickly locked onto the enemy that had appeared in the corner. He sneered and said, "Let me see how many substitutes you have left!"

In the process of searching for the enemy, he discovered that Parker was squirming on top of Capim. The scene was bloody and disgusting. It was a repulsive sight, both terrible and horrifying.

However, Harras didn't have the luxury of time to save his subordinate. He was well aware that the effects of the poison would only worsen over time, so he had to get rid of the enemy as quickly as possible, so he couldn't be distracted.

If he didn't, he would have to leave the dining hall first to recover from the poison; thus, allowing the enemy to escape without getting any useful information.

He signaled Katy to go forward again, so as to hold back Klein, who couldn't fly or float. He took a breath and tried to catch a breather.

There's a strange smell in the air... This is probably a result of the increasing toxicity of the poison... This thought flashed through Harras's mind, but he didn't think too much about it.

He raised his left hand and solemnly declared, "The illegal intrusion of another's house is a crime!

"An illegal intrusion..."

While repeating the statement for a second time, Harras found it hard to breathe again. For a moment, he was unable to catch his breath, so he could only stop midway.

He took another deep breath, adjusted himself, and spoke again.

"The illegal intrusion of another's house is a crime!

He repeated it three times, and Klein, who was still unable to extricate himself from Katy's entanglement, felt a baffling chill.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Katy showed coughing symptoms again, and the flailing of her whip became sluggish.

Klein took the opportunity to stop the embroilment with her, but he didn't attack her. Instead, he raised his head, opened his mouth, and let out a sharp cry that no human could hear!

Hum! Katy's head jerked up, and her body swayed. She felt like the ground was bobbing up and down.

Harras only felt a slight dizziness before returning to normal. He looked at Klein coldly and said in a majestic voice, "The guilty should be restricted!"

Klein, who was lunging at him, found to his surprise that his feet had seemed to be immobilized by invisible shackles. It made his movements suddenly turn rigid.

Katy, who had recovered a little, swung open the revolver's cylinder and quickly removed the spent and unused rounds.

Then, she took out a quick reloading device and stuffed six rounds of ammunition, including her remaining purifying bullets, into the cylinder.

Harras clenched his left fist and prepared for an attack.

He wanted to chain his attack with Katy's shooting, in a bid to completely finish the enemy or to expend his substitutes.

At this moment, the black-armored Klein smiled.

It was because the opportunity he had been waiting for had come!

He knew that it would take time for the Biological Poison Bottle to show any significant effects. And once Beyonders sensed that something was wrong, they would act accordingly, either to find the hidden enemy or to escape the toxic environment. It would be difficult

to seriously damage them or even finish them. Therefore, he had two other reasons for using the Biological Poison Bottle.

The first reason was to weaken the enemy.

The second reason was to mask some smells so that Harras and the others would attribute all the abnormal smells they detected to the poison in the air. It made them focus all their attention on this aspect.

This was the most important segment of a "magic show" and also the key to success or failure.

That abnormal smell was the smell of gas!

The reason why Klein let the gas lamp and the fire in the fireplace suddenly brighten and extinguish wasn't solely to affect Harras and company's vision. It was mainly to attract their attention, so that he could destroy a few hidden gas pipes!

In the beginning, he had intentionally put himself in danger in order to trick Katy into firing a bullet meant for wraiths and specters, so that she would no longer blindly fire at him and not trigger a corresponding explosion!

He kept entangling himself with her and hadn't made any other attempts solely because he was waiting for the air to be filled with gas!

Therefore, he kept holding back from using Flaming Jump or Flame Controlling!

As for Harras's actions of using Confinement on the room, he had expected it, but he didn't expect it to be this successful. Therefore, before he entered the dining room, he had kindly inspected the doors and windows to see if they were airtight. He had destroyed the hidden gas pipes in the hall, causing the area —both inside and outside—to become a huge "bomb." Even without Confinement, it would ultimately not affect anything!

As a "specter," Klein was undoubtedly unafraid of explosions!

Lower-level ghosts might be annihilated by fire, but "specters" would at most suffer some damage. This was why Klein had to buy extra

purifying bullets and the Sun Brooch despite the fact that he had Flame Controlling.

When he saw that Katy had raised her revolver and was about to shoot, and that Harras was about to pronounce “Death” on him, Klein smiled and snapped his fingers.

Harras suddenly felt a dangerous foreboding.

However, at this moment, he saw that a flame had already lit up in the fireplace to his side, instantly igniting the surrounding air.

BOOM!

With a loud boom, Harras’s vision was instantly filled with an inferno that filled the room. It was as if he was watching a grand display of fireworks.

Capim lay flat on the ground, itching and aching, wishing he could tear himself apart on the spot to rid himself of this hellish pain.

Then, he saw a scarlet wave of fire that spread over in a flash, and he heard a deafening explosion.

He imagined that this last moment would seem infinitely long and that it would allow him to recall all of the beautiful scenes when his wife and children were still by his side. He thought that he would feel relieved because he would no longer have to endure this inhuman torture, but at that moment, extreme fear and an intense desire to live surged from the bottom of his heart. And the so-called memories didn't even flash past his mind before he was overwhelmed by an excruciating pain before being plunged into deep darkness.

Boom!

The dining room windows were blasted apart, accompanied by countless brick fragments and rubble, as well as the burning tongues of fire that kept reaching outwards.

The guards patrolling this area were immediately knocked over. Those who were lucky enough to not get hit had their ears left ringing. Their bodies either swayed, staggered, or fell.

They saw that more than half of the dining room's outer wall had collapsed and that the flames seemed to be floating in midair.

The residents of the entire street and the police officers in charge of the surrounding area heard a loud boom at the same time, leaving them confused and frightened.

In the dining room, dressed in black armor and a black crown, Klein stood there, bathing in the red flames and enjoying the strong blasts of the waves without flinching.

A lot of the black gases around him had dispersed, and even his Spirit Body had suffered some damage, but it wasn't serious at all.

Beside a toppled table, Parker and Capim were blasted into a corner, their heads were cracking and their bodies charred.

The surface of their bodies was still quietly burning with flames, and the rest of the servants were in a similar state.

In the area opposite the fireplace, Katy, who had been unable to avoid the attack in time, was slammed into the wall and then fell to the ground. Her body was mangled and covered in blood, and there were a lot of charred marks on her skin. Not a single piece of her skin remained intact.

She wasn't dead yet, but she had fainted from her severe injuries. Even so, she still coughed while convulsing, inhaling large amounts of the lingering flames.

The black whip also suffered similar damage. Many cracks appeared on its surface, and a small portion of the whip was ignited. None of the Beyonder bullets that she possessed were spared from the explosion.

Katy was no longer capable of fighting.

Harras had rolled in time to protect his vitals, but there was still a lot of blood and charred flesh on him.

He staggered to his feet, revealing that his back, his hairband, and his legs were ablaze with red flames.

His breathing became more difficult, and his body suffered relatively severe injuries.

However, this was sufficient to prove the robustness and strength of his body. Or rather, having worn the black iron glove, his body became sufficiently robust, and his physique was sufficiently strong!

However, this was within Klein's expectations.

Since he was unable to assess how much damage his opponent could take, he had overestimated his enemy's constitution while coming up with a plan.

Out of the corner of his eye, Harras saw that Klein was almost perfectly fine. His pupils shrank as he hurriedly stretched out his left hand and pointed in that direction. He said in a low voice, "Exile!"

Again, Klein failed to resist and was pushed away like scrap paper in a hurricane. He flew out of the dining room. In the hall outside, after

the momentary ignition, the fire had already weakened. Another wave of disaster was brewing due to the wooden staircase, but the damage here wasn't too severe because the main body of the explosion had been "confined" to the dining room.

Seizing this opportunity, Harras suddenly turned around and ran outside without looking back.

Even though the flames covering his body were still burning, he didn't waste any time to deal with them.

He knew that he was in a terrible condition and on the brink of losing control. Furthermore, the effects of the poison would soon reach its peak. Compounded by these two factors, he didn't think that he had any chance of defeating the intruder. It would be the same even if he had the help of the Sequence 7, Belize, at the entrance to the basement!

Harras believed that if this battle continued, the only thing that awaited him was having the poison act up or him losing control due to his injuries!

Once he decided to run, he didn't care about Katy, who was still alive, anymore.

When Klein, who had just stabilized his body under "Exile," saw this scene. He immediately raised his head, opened his mouth, and let out a shriek that no human could hear!

Hum!

Harras felt a wave of dizziness, and his feet paused for a moment. His skin, which was still in relatively good condition, was now covered in dense, translucent blisters. This was an early sign of him losing control.

However, he quickly recovered and continued his mad dash, escaping from the lawn of the villa.

He's really hard to kill... Klein didn't pursue him, in order to avoid an accident.

He remembered that his goal was to rescue the victims and not to wipe away these degenerate Beyonders.

More importantly, he had expended a lot of his energy and had suffered heavy injuries. If he were to give chase, he might not be able to stop Harras's berserk counterattack.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers and fired an Air Bullet.

The bullet struck Katy in the head, ending her pain.

Immediately following that, Klein turned around and flew towards the entrance to the basement.

Belize, who had a full beard, had been keeping an eye on the situation outside, but he didn't dare to leave his post out of fear that the intruder's accomplices would take the opportunity to break into the dungeon.

At this very moment, he held a high-pressure steam rifle and had his Spirit Vision activated. He had been frightened by the loud boom and became abnormally tense.

Immediately afterwards, he saw the dignified specter fly over, and without hesitation, he raised his rifle and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

White mist was ejected from the barrel, and a sharp-tipped palegold bullet was shot forward at an astonishing speed.

Klein was prepared and long had a hunch. He had drawn out a small curve before Belize fired.

The bullet tore through the hall, past the front door, and to the outside.

At the same time, Belize rushed out of the duty room, holding his high-pressure steam rifle and took on a threatening pose as he quickly moved towards the door.

He believed that the intruder, who could deal with Harras, Katy, and Parker, would be able to easily kill him as well. Besides, such a big commotion must've attracted a lot of attention. He couldn't be certain that the Mandated Punishers would come over to investigate. Therefore, his only choice was to flee!

Klein once again let out an invisible shriek, making Belize feel as if he had been smashed by a hammer. He saw stars as a few drops of blood dripped from the tip of his nose.

But this didn't stop Belize from running. After shooting at Klein to stop him, he was already running into the hall, tumbling towards the door.

Klein hesitated for a moment, then he gave up on chasing and fighting. He turned off the main valve, went to the entrance of the basement, and snapped his fingers repeatedly.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Air Bullets shot at the invisible walls, gradually disintegrating the Confinement.

This was also one of the reasons why Klein dared to cause a gas explosion and use the Biological Poison Bottle. With the effects of Harras's Confinement in the underground dungeon, as long as it wasn't a frontal assault, he didn't have to worry about accidentally harming those pitiful girls.

He destroyed the locks and flew into the dungeon, first finding the cell where Daisy had been held based on the revelation from his prior divination scenes. He then confirmed that she wasn't hurt too badly and was still able to move.

Then, his body turned illusory and melted into the metal door.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

The iron doors on one side opened quickly, one after another, as though an invisible specter was running to unlock them.

Creak! Creak! Creak!

After one side was done, he did it for the other side.

Daisy and the other girls were frightened by the explosion outside. After a while, she was surprised to find that the door to her cell was open for some baffling reason. Yet, no one entered. It felt like she could leave at any time.

Some of the girls, who hadn't been disciplined at all since they were recently kidnapped, mustered their courage, got up, and attempted to run to the exit of the basement.

They passed through the hall which was slightly damaged by the explosion, and they left the burning villa's worsening condition, running faster and faster in the direction of freedom.

When they reached the street, Daisy and the other girls thought to look back.

Looking back, they could just barely make out an imposing figure standing upright on top of the evil building. It was clad in full black armor, and it wore a black crown.

Whoosh!

The cape behind the figure began to flutter silently.

As they remembered the scene, they sought a nearby cathedral with their mistrust towards the police.

When Klein returned to the smoky and burning dining room, he found that Parker's and Katy's Beyonder characteristics had just begun to show signs of appearing.

He checked the items they were carrying and confirmed that most of them had been destroyed. Even their money was charred to a crisp.

Klein jumped up to the second and third floor, quickly checking for any relevant clues.

He didn't attempt to use mediumship, because he was short on time. And bringing them above the gray fog didn't meet the requirements of his "curtain call."

If even a minor leader was made to maintain "secrecy," then these important figures would definitely have their own "restrictions." They aren't good candidates for performing mediumship as I please. Furthermore, the previous series of required actions is too troublesome, complicated, and inappropriate for the current situation that I'm in... Klein ended his investigation with nothing to show for, but he picked up a deck of tarot cards.

Returning to the destroyed, charred dining room, he took out all the Major Arcana cards from the tarot card deck and walked over to Capim's corpse.

Then, he specially took two of them and scattered the rest over Capim's body.

When this was done, he covered Capim's eyes with the two tarot cards he had specially drawn. They faced up with their main side.

By this time, Parker's and Katy's Beyonder characteristics had appeared.

...

Tens of seconds later, an illusory door covered with complicated symbols appeared in midair outside the villa.

The door opened without a sound, and from it, a handsome man in a crisp suit walked out. He looked to be in his forties—mature and elegant.

He had a pair of golden eyes, and with just one sweep of his face, he locked onto the dining room in the midst of the fire.

At this moment, a strong gust of wind blew past, and a figure flew over at high speeds.

It was an old man wearing a soft hat. His silver eyes had an abnormal seriousness to them. He was wearing a black robe with the symbol of the Lord of Storms embroidered on it. It was none other than the Cardinal of the Church of Storms, the Archbishop of Backlund, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake.

"Why are you here?" Ace asked in a deep voice.

Any Beyonder-related matters in Cherwood Borough came under the jurisdiction of the Holy Wind Cathedral, so he was entitled to ask.

The handsome man's expression turned slightly nasty as he

replied, "I live nearby."

They were close to the West Borough.

The two of them didn't speak any further. They landed on the ground at the same time and entered the explosion site. A violent hurricane churned and swept away the flames, sending them to the artificial fountain outside.

The wind seemed to have a life and intelligence of its own.

The two demigod figures then saw Katy, whose head was shot and her flesh charred black, and Parker, who was entangled with someone else while his head had caved in and cracked. They also saw Capim, who was covered in tarot cards, as well as the two Major Arcana cards on the face of the human trafficker.

These were the "Judgment" card which depicted an Angel blowing a great trumpet, and "The Emperor" card which was decked out in armor and was crowned!

Almost at the same time, Cardinal Snake and the handsome man sensed something and turned their heads to look outside.

They discovered a majestic figure in black armor and a black crown located at the top of the house by the side of the villa.

The figure nodded slightly, and his cape was lifted.

Then, without any warning, he disappeared, right under the noses of the two High-Sequence Beyonders.

Chapter 381: Conjectures

With a crackle, branched lightning lit up the early-winter night with a silvery-white flash.

It didn't smite the ground, but instead, it tore through the air, illuminating the spot where Klein stood, as if it was daytime, making him stand out.

Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, retracted his gaze, his face was gloomy as he whispered, "Rose School of Thought?

"It's not a wraith, nor is it an undead creature..."

The mature middle-aged man with a pair of golden eyes turned his head to the side to look at Capim's corpse and said, "Covering the target's corpse with tarot cards...

"This is the second time something like this has happened in the past two months."

"When was the first instance?" Cardinal Snake asked in a deep voice.

The mature middle-aged man in the well-ironed formal suit coughed lightly and said, "The time when the True Creator attempted to descend into this world with the help of a swindler."

"Then it's not the Rose School of Thought." Cardinal Snake made a definite judgment.

Although those organizations that worshiped evil gods weren't fond of anyone, they wouldn't deliberately foil the plans of their counterparts; instead, they wished to see their counterparts succeed, waiting for them to make a mess of the situation.

"I think so too. Perhaps it's the appearance of a new secret organization. Their characteristic feature is to scatter tarot cards all over the target's body." The middle-aged man smiled. "And the different appearance of the tarot cards imply different meanings... This corpse has two cards over his face. One is 'Judgment,' and the other is 'The Emperor.''Judgment' is the motive and goal, while 'The Emperor' is the organization's code name? Of course, this might also be a type of ritual."

Cardinal Snake didn't respond as he surveyed the area.

"Let's see what exactly happened here."

It was only at this point in time that the first batch of Mandated Punishers arrived at Capim's villa.

...

Above the gray fog, having only used Paper Figurine Substitutes thrice and not being pushed to his limits, Klein was about to use divination to confirm Daisy's safety afterward.

"Daisy will successfully return home." Holding the spirit pendulum in his left hand, he closed his eyes and silently chanted the sentence.

After repeating it seven times, Klein opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant turning counterclockwise, but it moved with a very slow frequency and a tiny amplitude.

This means that Daisy's journey home will be quite a bumpy one but almost negligible... After interpreting the revelation, Klein was relieved of his final concerns.

He then looked at the two items in front of him, both of which were radiating with a strong spiritual luster.

One of them was a light blue, translucent hexagonal pillar. There were traces of light flashing through it, as though it was lightning that came from the depths of one's consciousness. This was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Ma'am Katy.

The other belonged to Parker, who hadn't been able to play a role in the battle. His Beyonder characteristic had condensed into a ball, like a child's fist.

This "fist" was made up of three colors—iron-black and dark red colors intertwined with a large swath of silver.

Klein didn't hesitate to conjure a pen and paper. He was ready to use these two Beyonder characteristics to divine the corresponding potion formulas.

Before he advanced to Sequence 7, because of the additional influences that had been left on the Beyonder characteristics he had, it was almost impossible to use divination to determine the formulas. Even if this mysterious space could help him eliminate the interference and increase his divination ability to a certain extent, it still wasn't enough.

Therefore, the only method Klein could use, in the past, was mediumship.

After he became a Magician, he was preliminarily able to determine it using the Beyonder characteristic for a divination above the gray fog; however, there was a high probability of him failing.

This time, without exception, Klein had shamelessly failed.

However, he also had some gains, and that was to be able to find out the corresponding Sequence names of the two Beyonder characteristics.

Parker is a Sequence 8 Sheriff and Katy is a Sequence 7 Interrogator... Aren't these from the Arbiter pathway? This pathway is controlled by the royal family, the military, and a small number of ancient aristocratic families in Loen. Any leaks of formulas and Beyonder ingredients are dealt with harshly... Could a number of the girls abducted by Capim be sent to the estate of some aristocrat?

But there's no need for them to send four Beyonders to help Capim just to enjoy themselves. It obviously doesn't make sense... Harras is much more powerful than Katy, so perhaps he's a Sequence 6 of this pathway. After wearing that glove, he might even be as strong as a Sequence 5... Could it be that they're involved in some bloody heretic sacrifice, and the target they seek cannot be exposed?

Apart from those on the inside of the Kingdom, Feynapotter's Castiya family also possesses this Beyonder pathway, which is then transmitted to their army and intelligence system... Could this be another espionage case of some unknown nature?

Klein tried to divine a few of his conjectures, but he failed again.

He temporarily put this matter to the back of his mind and lightly tapped the edge of the long bronze table as he muttered to himself, *As*

long as I have the formula, with the corresponding supplementary ingredients, these two Beyonder characteristics will be able to turn a person into a Sequence 8 Sheriff and Sequence 7 Interrogator... Miss Magician's friend who's called Xio seems to be lacking the Beyonder ingredients for Sheriff...

I can sell Parker's Beyonder characteristic to Miss Magician through The World so that I can quickly amass the money needed for the ingredients of the Faceless Sequence potion... However, always doing it through The World doesn't seem rather appropriate. I deliberately left the tarot cards this time. If Miss Justice were to hear of this matter, then she would definitely believe that it was done by my Blessed... I'll let Mr. Fool do the selling on his behalf...

Klein quickly finalized a plan and made the Sheriff and Interrogator Beyonder characteristics fly to the corner and hid it among the junk pile.

I wonder what the names are for the Arbiter pathway's Sequence 6 and 5... It seems like something that uses order and laws... Judge? Klein put away those thoughts and closed his eyes midway to carefully observe his current state.

Once again, he felt his spirituality become lively as the potion stirred. He felt that his digestion of the potion had sped up.

This time, he had confidence, based on his intuition, that he had concluded most of the "Magician principles." The remaining minutiae were good to have, but it didn't really matter if he lacked them. It didn't significantly affect his digestion process.

Conjuring a fountain pen and goatskin, Klein enhanced his memory by writing:

"The Magician's Principles:

"1. Never perform unprepared.

"2. Challenge the impossible, even if the final outcome is nothing but an illusion."

Klein believed that these were the two core tenets of the "Magician's Principles." Grasping them would be key, and the rest were supplementary for perfection.

"3. Take the initiative to perform.

"4. Try to get applause from the audience. "5.
Wield control of the target's attention."

...

Putting down the dark red fountain pen, Klein skimmed through it and judged them by himself.

Daily "acting," together with three or four proactive "acting" instances would be enough to allow me to digest the Magician potion before new year's. If I were to challenge an impossible performance during this period, then my progress would be even faster... This is roughly at the speed I wish to achieve.

There were still about two months till 1 January 1350.

After doing all this, Klein rubbed his temples, prepared to return to the real world.

After putting away the Black Emperor card, the Biological Poison Bottle, and other items, he suddenly laughed and said selfdeprecatingly, "Challenge the impossible... Isn't that equivalent to courting death?"

As his voice echoed, Klein's figure disappeared from the space above the gray fog.

In the cheap hotel in the Backlund Bridge area, he suddenly opened his eyes and saw the candlelight of his summoning ritual.

After quickly clearing up everything, Klein put on a thick worker's jacket he'd bought for 4 soli and went to the window.

He picked up the sweet iced tea that he had bought earlier and looked at his blurry figure which was reflected in the window. There was a heartfelt smile on his face as he whispered, "Cheers."

Just as he finished his sentence, he touched the glass with his cup, then lifted his chin and downed it in one gulp.

Then, he sauntered out of the hotel. The nearby gas lamps were already fully lit up, and pedestrians and carts were bustling about, oblivious to the explosion at the border between the Cherwood Borough and West Borough.

Klein strolled around the Bravehearts Bar for a while, and at 7:58, he knocked on the door of the Beyonder gathering organized by Eye of Wisdom.

He wore an iron mask and a hooded robe, acting completely ordinary.

...

Meanwhile, Xio, who went to various places every night to check on her contacts, saw a sign that had never appeared before.

It belonged to the golden-masked man who had sold the Sheriff's formula to her at the gathering organized by Mr. A.

It was the sign of an emergency meeting!

He hasn't come looking for me all this time, and I've been pretending that it had never happened. Why would he suddenly... Xio thought for a moment before deciding to take a look.

The golden-masked man had promised to give her some missions, allowing her to save enough money and exchange it for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients.

Therefore, Xio switched areas and marked the time and place of the meeting.

Half an hour later, Xio walked out of her hiding place after secretly observing a remote alley that also extended in all directions. She walked towards the golden-masked man.

The man was still wearing his black tuxedo. His light brown eyes swept over Xio's head.

"There's a mission for you."

"Difficulty and compensation?" Xio asked like clockwork.

The man nudged his mask which was forged from gold.

“It’s not dangerous, but it can be very dangerous. It all depends on what you do.

“The initial compensation is thirty pounds. If you can acquire useful information, I can even directly give you a Beyonder ingredient corresponding to Sheriff.”

“What’s the mission,” Xio said with a frown.

The golden-masked man’s gaze turned heavy as he said, “Through the channels available to you, figure out who has been recently been keeping tabs on Capim.”

“Capim? That human trafficker?” Xio returned with a question.

The man nodded.

“Yes.”

“I reject this mission. I hate him!” Xio immediately refused.

The man opposite her chuckled.

“You aren’t working for Capim.

“Because he’s dead.”

“Dead?” Xio was instantly stunned.

“He died at home, and his body was covered with tarot cards. There were two cards on his face, one ‘Judgment,’ and the other ‘The Emperor.’ By the way, pay attention to matters in the past few years which have involved tarot cards but were not reported to the police,” the man added.

Chapter 382: Hero Bandit

Cherwood Borough, in the house Xio and Fors rented.

Fors was just finishing the beginning of her new book and, in her good mood, prepared to reward herself with a cigarette, when Xio pushed open the door and entered the study.

“Smoking is harmful to your health.” Xio sniffed.

Fors didn’t argue with her when she saw her puzzled look. Instead, she asked, “Looks like something happened to you?”

Xio scratched her rough blonde hair and sat down on a nearby chair.

“That person from before contacted me—the person who sold the Sheriff formula to me through another person at Mr. A’s gathering.

“He gave me a relatively simple mission. The initial reward is thirty pounds. I don’t even know if there are any hidden dangers...”

Fors thought for a moment and then said, “That person... There should be an organization behind him, but why would they want to rope you in? Aren’t they afraid of being implicated by your intelligence; thus, causing the entire organization to be completely destroyed? There’s nothing they really need from you either. Your looks are barely passable, but you’re too short, so perhaps your life is relatively more valuable... Eh, what mission is it?”

Xio was used to her good friend’s snide remarks as she ignored what she said in the beginning. She directly answered the second question, “Investigate if there has been anyone keeping tabs on Capim recently.”

“Capim? The human trafficker who deserves to be hanged—no, burned to death?” Although Fors wasn’t a bounty hunter, it was her writer’s instinct to gather material, so she often asked Xio to tell her stories and news she had learned.

Xio nodded. “It’s him, but he’s already dead. He seems to have died rather miserably.”

“How did he die? Was he sliced to death by a knife, bit by bit?” Fors asked, pleased and curious.

“That person didn’t go into a detailed description. Perhaps it’ll be mentioned in the papers tomorrow.” Xio thought for two seconds before continuing, “He only mentioned a rather special situation at the scene of the death. He said that Capim’s corpse was covered in tarot cards. His face was covered with the ‘Judgment’ and ‘The Emperor’ cards.

“The ‘Judgment’ card probably meant that it was a judgment on Capim, and the verdict was death. But what does ‘The Emperor card’ represent? That murderer, no—that hero’s identity?” As a best-selling author, Fors instinctively began interpreting the unique layout of the scene of the crime.

Suddenly, she froze.

Tarot cards? The corpse was strewn with tarot cards? Fors suddenly thought of the secret organization she had just joined— Tarot Club!

It couldn’t be one of us, could it? However, none of the members has the code name of The Emperor... If it’s really the case, then this is the first time I’ve found traces of the Tarot Club in the real world... We’re not just a secret organization that only exists above the gray fog. As Fors’s emotions churned, she felt pleasantly surprised and also worried.

...

Under an attendant’s lead, Klein entered the familiar activity room.

There was only one candle in the room. The dim yellow light made the surroundings look like a scene from a ghost story. Coupled with the black robes and the iron masks worn by the mysterious people, the atmosphere turned even more intense.

The moment he stepped in, Klein suddenly had a baffling sensation.

He felt the flickering candle flame staring at him.

He felt that the flame would burst and ignite his hair and robe.

He felt that the curtain behind the oriel window would suddenly flare up, enveloping his body, and covering his nose and mouth, forcefully choking him to death.

What's happening? Klein was stunned as he turned extremely tense.

It wasn't a premonition for danger, but a feeling that was hard to avoid.

Klein carefully found a seat and sat down.

The moment his buttocks touched the surface of the chair, he felt as if the chair would explode and thick wooden thorns would end up piercing through his body.

This reminded him of the videos he had seen back on Earth— due to the explosion of a low-quality gas cylinder under a swivel chair, the steel pole, and the debris had stabbed into the seated owner's buttocks, drilling into his abdomen. The whole scene was filled with badly mutilated blood and flesh, a ghastly sight.

Why am I always making such bad associations? Is it because of the damage done to my Spirit Body from the battle earlier? Klein looked around thoughtfully and saw that the fat Apothecary had still not attended.

What happened? Or has he already left Backlund? Klein murmured something to himself and heard Eye of Wisdom announce the beginning of the gathering.

In the course of the next few hours, Klein felt as if the chandelier on the ceiling was going to fall sideways and smash into his head. He thought that the coffee table in front of Eye of Wisdom would suddenly move sideways and stumble him over, and he suspected that the members of the gathering around him were full of malice and might cause him trouble at any moment.

It made him fidgety, alert, and puzzled, and he was too distracted to pay attention to deals that either ended in success or failure.

If one is to say that a premonition for danger is like an occasional vibration, reminding one that there's news entering the room or an incoming phone call, then the feeling I have at this moment is akin to an electric drill boring constantly, causing me to be unable to relax or pay attention to anything else... Klein tried to rub his forehead, but it only touched the cold iron mask.

At this moment, he felt as if his iron mask would suddenly cave in and stick close to his face, embedding itself into his brain.

Is it really because my Spirit Body was damaged so it's making me hallucinate? Klein frowned.

He originally wanted to make a request to buy the Thousandfaced Hunter's blood and mutated pituitary gland at this meeting, but in such a situation, he could only give up out of caution.

Although the level of Eye of Wisdom's gathering wasn't high, and there was a high probability that it wouldn't involve a high-level monster like the Thousand-faced Hunter, Klein believed that a lot of the members here also attended other gatherings and might be able to come into contact with the relevant information and clues.

Amidst his anxiety, Klein attended the gathering as a bystander.

Just after taking off his robe, removing his mask, and leaving the room, the feeling that everything in the room was going to harm him had instantly disappeared, disappearing in the oddest manner!

This... Klein's pupils shrank, confirming that his previous experiences didn't originate from the damage to his Spirit Body; otherwise, he wouldn't have experienced two completely different states, inside and outside.

He suspected that there was a person or creature in the activity room of the gathering, one that was invisible, imperceptible, and extremely terrifying. That entity had stimulated his spiritual perception as a Seer and his sense of danger as a Clown, but because of the entity's suppression or some other special reason, this stimulus appeared in the form of a rich association that failed to make him realize it.

Who could it be? This is too scary. Just the existence itself made me have a reaction similar to the symptoms of losing control... Without making a sound, Klein left Eye of Wisdom's house and headed toward the nearest street.

All of a sudden, he had a guess.

The Bravehearts Bar is nearby, and it's also the monitoring area of Wraith Steve, who was killed by Miss Sharron, Maric, and I...

Their deaths would definitely make the Rose School of Thought's High-Sequence Beyonder angry, and he would cast his sights over here, towards the Beyonders living near the Bravehearts Bar...

Was that him?

Fortunately, I used the Biological Poison Bottle and the Sun Brooch tonight, and to prevent myself from being divined, I left them above the gray fog... Otherwise, the result would be unimaginable... The Magician who just completed an impossible performance would be killed directly here...

The Beyonder world is truly dangerous...

...

Inside the Holy Wind Cathedral, Cardinal Ace Snake looked at the captain of the Mandated Punisher team and asked emotionlessly, "Who is Capim?

"Why is there an underground dungeon in his villa?"

The captain of the Mandated Punisher team replied immediately, "He's a tycoon, one who was rumored to be related to many cases of missing girls. He's suspected of being a human trafficker, and that he is secretly engaged in the slave trade.

"That underground dungeon proves the rumors."

"Why did a human trafficker receive the protection of so many Beyonders? And their Sequences aren't low either," Cardinal Snake pressed.

"Your Eminence, this requires an investigation. We tried using Beyonder means to find clues, but all of them failed," the captain of the Mandated Punisher team replied, somewhat trembling in fear.

"I've tried it too," Cardinal Snake didn't blame him.

This member of the Church of Storms's upper echelon paused for a moment before continuing, "Continue to investigate this matter. Also, find that Sequence 6 or 5 specter."

After his subordinate had left, Cardinal Snake picked up his fountain pen and wrote down in his notebook a number of subjects to pay close attention to: “Capim, human trafficking, tarot card ritual, strange specter without a high Sequence, concealed plot.”

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey was waiting for the maid to cut up the food, when she heard her father, Earl Hall, who was used to reading the newspapers at breakfast, laugh.

“Capim is dead.”

“Who is he?” Audrey asked with her eyes wide open.

In fact, she wasn’t the least bit curious about who Capim was. She was simply going along with her father, who obviously had the desire to share his thoughts.

This was both her specialty as a daughter and the innate nature of a Telepathist.

“He’s a tycoon who secretly might be a human trafficker. He has rather good ties with some people. Heh...” Earl Hall chuckled. “He was killed last night. There were obvious signs of him being judged at the scene of the crime, so the newspapers are calling the murderer a Hero Bandit. The Hero Bandit Black Emperor. Oh, they named him after the code name of the rulers of the ancient Solomon Empire.”

Hero Bandit? Hero Bandit Black Emperor? Black Emperor... Audrey immediately thought of the Card of Blasphemy belonging to Mr. Fool. This was the item of the highest level she had come into contact with so far.

She suddenly became interested in the Capim murder: “It sounds interesting. Although it’s illegal, I still want to say that the Hero Bandit did beautifully. Oh, dad, how did it go?”

“The police and relevant departments of the Church didn’t divulge any exact details. I haven’t met them either, but this is what’s said on the papers. The Hero Bandit was dressed in black armor and a black

crown. He had a cape of the same color behind him. After he entered Capim's villa, not only did he steal all the valuables in the safe, but he even stole the lives of Capim and his evil henchmen, rescuing girls who were locked up in the underground dungeon. He scattered tarot cards on Capim's body, and the most prominent of all were the two cards that covered his face. One of them was 'Judgment' and the other was 'The Emperor.'" Earl Hall held the newspaper as he described it with a smile.

Tarot cards..."Judgment" card and "The Emperor" card... Audrey's eyes suddenly lit up.

Audrey could almost be certain that it had been done by Mr. Fool's Blessed when she heard the description of the familiar scene.

She suddenly felt a strong sense of immersion, participation, and pride.

That was a human trafficker whose hands were stained with blood and evil... The "Judgment" card is the retribution enacted against him in the name of justice. Was the verdict hanging, beheading, or burning at the stake? The Emperor should be a symbol of his identity... Was this the Blessed who sneaked into the Royal Museum and stole the Black Emperor card? Audrey let her imagination run wild for a moment.

She had intended to press for more information and finer details, but from the look on her father's face, the tone of his voice, and the color of his emotions, she could tell that he still didn't know what was going on. Therefore, she could only suppress her curiosity and planned on asking her good friend, Kance Leerhsen, from MI9.

Although directly asking Kance about it would suit my image in this aspect, that would still be rather abrupt. It would also conflict with my identity as a noble. Hmm... I'll get Annie to prepare a few invitations for an afternoon tea party, sending them separately to Glaint, Kance, Murray, Christine, Jane, and the others... Most of them are interested in mysticism, so they would feel interested in someone known as the Hero Bandit Black Emperor. Under my guidance, they can help me ask a lot of questions that wouldn't be convenient for me to ask... It's decided... Audrey retracted her attention and nibbled at her breakfast.

She believed that Mr. Fool's Blessed wouldn't have dealt with Capim purely for the sake of punishing evil since it wasn't in line with his identity and status. Of course, if Audrey was still the same Audrey who had just joined the Tarot Club a few months ago, then she definitely would've been willing to accept such an explanation; otherwise, she wouldn't have chosen the Justice card as her symbol.

After experiencing so many gatherings and so many matters, she felt that she had matured a lot and was no longer as innocent. She believed that there had to be more important and essential factors behind this

matter, such as an evil god or secret organization which Capim was involved in.

I hope Kance can provide some useful information, Audrey thought with anticipation.

...

15 Minsk Street. Klein was eating white bread with jam and flipping through today's newspapers.

"What? A safe?" As he read, he almost choked on his own saliva.

It wasn't me... I didn't... Don't spout nonsense... In his mind, Klein immediately rejected the description of his theft of everything in the safe thrice.

The situation had been pressing, and in order to gain clues, all he did was burrow into the safe to see if there were any important documents or evidence despite having found the safe. He didn't take anything, and he quickly left the safe and went to another room.

Of course, Klein, in his Spirit Body state, had also suffered some damage from the gas explosion, and the total weight of the items he could carry had been greatly reduced. There were only gold bars, jewelry, land deeds, house deeds, antiques, and other items in the safe, which were either not convenient for him to take, or there was no way he could launder them.

Perhaps he has a place reserved especially for cash, but unfortunately, I didn't find it, nor did I have the time to look for it... Klein muttered silently to himself, confirming that it was the subsequent investigators who had divided up all the contents in the safe.

He looked at the newspaper, took a sip of Sibe black tea, and slowly exhaled. He smiled inwardly.

Hero Bandit Black Emperor... I like that name...

After breakfast, Klein put on his thick double-breasted frock coat and half top hat, and he held a solid black cane. Opening the door, he left Minsk Street for Broken Axe Lane on the boundary of the East Borough.

That was where Daisy had disappeared.

After finalizing his plans yesterday, and before he committed to his operation, he had deliberately made a trip to Broken Axe Lane to seriously look for clues. He knocked on the doors of the nearby houses and asked if they had seen any girls like Daisy.

Although Klein didn't believe that the official Beyonders would think that a poor family would be able to afford a "Hero Bandit" who had at least the strength of a Sequence 6, and he believed that there was a higher probability that the investigation would be directed towards the secrets Capim was involved in, supplemented by "who had been keeping tabs on Capim recently," and other peripheral investigations, he still cautiously decided to put on a show and try his best to play out the entire act. What if one of the Beyonder enforcers lost their mind and planned to make a preliminary investigation in this aspect?

Some families might have some savings and would be able to hire other detectives. The chances of being suspected as a kindhearted person like me who just took on the case yesterday are extremely low. As long as I'm not suspected, they wouldn't compare my performance from the previous Lanevus case... Besides, the Nighthawks were the ones who took action previously and were assisted by the military's special department. Capim's case happened in Cherwood Borough, so the ones taking on the case would likely be the Mandated Punishers. The communication between the two groups wouldn't be that smooth... Hmm, Katy and Parker belong to the Arbiter pathway. I wonder if the military will intervene... As a former Nighthawk, Klein had a sufficient understanding of the modus operandi of the various official organizations, their work styles, and their investigation habits.

Simply put, I have excellent anti-detective abilities... Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he boarded a carriage.

He was going to continue his investigation into Daisy's disappearance.

After all, he was an ordinary private detective who hadn't been able to confirm that Daisy's disappearance had anything to do with Capim.

...

At nine o'clock in the morning, Daisy returned to the shabby rented apartment under the escort of the police officer in charge of the neighborhood.

Along with a few pitiful girls like her, she had been settled into the various cathedrals in Cherwood Borough last night and had been questioned accordingly. It included what they saw when they escaped, what they saw when they looked back, where they lived, what their family situation was, if they knew any friends who were out of the ordinary, and so on and so forth.

Daisy, who was still in a state of panic and lingering fear, answered the questions truthfully.

After that, no one came to her again.

She slept through the night and was sent back to East Borough early in the morning, where she was handed over to the fierce police officer she always saw.

Along the way, Daisy didn't dare to say anything. She trembled in fear, and only when she entered the apartment where she lived did she feel a little more at ease.

As soon as she stepped through the door, and before she could find her mother and sister through the hanging wet clothes, she heard a scream.

"Daisy!"

Freja stopped whatever she was doing and, like a nimble fawn, darted through the clothes hanging in the air and the random things on the ground. She ran to the door and hugged her sister tightly.

Then she let go of her hand, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, she sized Daisy up with pleasant surprise and in concern.

"Are you alright?

"It's so wonderful that you're finally back!"

Liv also stood up from behind the washbasin. She wiped her hands on her clothes and asked, rubbing her eyes, "Daisy, where have you been these past few days?"

At that moment, the police officer interrupted, “She was kidnapped. We rescued her.”

“Thank you, thank you! You guys are t-too great!” Liv shed tears and randomly used an adjective.

The policeman coughed lightly and said, “That’s our duty... Have you met anyone strange in the past few days?”

Liv was stunned for a second. Hoping to not be involved in too many matters or get into any trouble, she said, “No, I really haven’t.”

The policeman waved his hand and said, “Be more careful in the future! Don’t take deserted shortcuts again!”

He couldn’t stand the humidity and the motley of smells so he turned and left.

Liv looked at her daughter again. She took wide strides over to her side and wiped her hands on the side of her clothes before hugging Daisy.

“It’s good that you’re back. It’s good that you’re back...” she murmured through her tears, not asking if Daisy had been hurt.

Daisy relaxed and sobbed.

Beside her, Freja was also crying. She stretched out her arms and hugged her mother and sister respectively.

The three of them cried for a while before letting go.

Liv wiped her eyes again and said, “Wash the clothes first; there are still a lot of them.”

Daisy, who had just been rescued, nodded and quickly threw herself into her busy work.

It wasn’t until noon, while they were nibbling on their black bread and drinking plain water that could hardly even be considered tea, that Liv finally had time to ask, “Daisy, were you hurt?”

Daisy shook her head.

“They just hit me a few times.”

“That’s great! The police rescued you? A kind detective was willing to help search for you for free yesterday, and you ended up returning today. Ah, he still has your vocabulary book,” Freja mentioned in passing.

Already prepared, Liv mentioned, “I’ll get Old Kohler to get it back and tell the detective you’re home so that he won’t have to busy himself over this matter. Regardless, we have to thank him again.”

Daisy felt relieved as she replied to her sister’s question, “No, it wasn’t the police. There was a sudden explosion, and the doors that kept us locked up were strangely opened, and we just ran out. However, I did see a gentleman or a lady on the roof.

“He wore black armor, a crown-like helmet, and a cape. He just stood there watching us quietly. None of those bad guys came to stop us or chase us down.”

As a tutor at the free school, Daisy clearly had a richer set of vocabulary than her mother, Liv.

“A person dressed like that saved you?” Liv answered in shock. By the side, Freja curiously waited for the answer.

Daisy nodded seriously and said, “Yes, he’s l-like what the bard sing of...

“A hero!”

Hero... Freja ruminated over the word, her eyes as bright as the stars.

...

In a certain secret chamber, a group of people were carefully comparing the Lanevus case with the Capim case using the information they were given as they searched for similarities between the motives and modus operandi.

“The two things cannot be linked together at all. The only thing that they have in common is evil, or rather, evil was defeated. The owner of the tarot card has upheld justice,” someone exclaimed.

“It can be confirmed that the two cases didn’t involve the same person. The difference in strength is obvious, and what they’re good at is even

more contrasting. Although it's possible that their Sequence had been elevated, Capim's murderer was a kind of specter, or someone that can switch into the Spirit Body state. That's not something common." Another person's analysis was endorsed by the majority.

Therefore, the person who called the meeting concluded, "Two cases, two different people, but they both threw out tarot cards. Perhaps the latter was committing a copycat crime, and if that's the case, we can target the people who are aware of the Lanevus case. The other possibility is that there is an organization!

"An organization symbolized by tarot cards!"

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

The aroma of Feynapotter's top-quality Mount Saint Dersee coffee blended with the splendid fragrance of the Queen's black tea to create an intoxicating symphony of smells. They lingered around the elegant three-tiered high tea tray, that served delicious and delicate desserts.

This was the high tea party organized by Audrey.

She had invited her friends of blue-blood parentage, all who were fellow enthusiasts in mysticism. They sat around her, talking and laughing.

Under Audrey's imperceptible guidance, Jane, Murray, and the others became extremely interested in the Black Emperor, the Hero Bandit who had appeared last night. All of them cast their eyes towards the noble-born Kance Leerhsen who had joined MI9.

"What Beyonder powers does that Black Emperor have?" the sweet-looking Christine asked curiously.

Among the few of them, the lowest rank among their fathers was that of a viscount. It allowed them to have sufficient status and channels to understand the existence of Beyonder powers and potions in their endearing pursuit of mysticism. But just like Audrey before, they were all unwilling to join the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, the Machinery Hivemind, and MI9.

Other than that, the families that they belonged to didn't have histories that traced back to a thousand years ago, and even the ancient aristocrats that had just been established in the Fourth Epoch of the Loen Kingdom weren't completely loyal to the royal family or to the upper echelons of the military. They weren't bestowed with any formulas, and even if they had Beyonder ingredients, it was unlikely that they could recognize them. They wouldn't even know how to use them even if they did recognize them.

This limited the possibility of Murray, Christine, and the others in becoming Beyonders. They could only look forward to it, but it was difficult for them to take that crucial step.

As for whether or not their elders had collected the potion formulas and nurtured Beyonders for their families, that was beyond their purview. After all, this wasn't allowed; if the King were to find out, they could use this as a reason to strip them of their noble titles.

Of course, there were already two traitors in the living room: Audrey, who had advanced to Sequence 8 Telepathist; and Viscount Glaint, who had gathered one portion of Beyonder ingredients. It wouldn't be long before he became an Apothecary.

The tall, thin, young gentleman, Kance, took a sip of his coffee and said, "I won't give you a direct answer. I'll just tell you some facts.

"Other than traces of a gas explosion in the dining room where the battle happened, various means were used to detect poison, substitutes, Specter's Shriek, bullets condensed with holy powers, and other elements. By the way, that Black Emperor, no—Hero Bandit was in a specter state."

It doesn't look like the person who had killed Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos, nor does it look like the person who had dealt with Lanevus in the sewers... Is the person involved in Capim's case Mr. Fool's third Blessed who stole the Black Emperor's card? There are at least three Blessed in Backlund alone... How many Blessed does "He" have in total? Audrey's heart skipped a beat as she deliberately asked, "Was there an intense Beyonder battle?"

Murray, under her lead, asked one step further, "There were Beyonders at Capim's place? Relatively powerful Beyonders? And there was more than one?"

"He's just a trafficker..." Viscount Glaint unconsciously expressed his doubt.

Audrey maintained her faint smile and curious gaze, patiently waiting for Kance's reply.

Kance laughed and said, "Murray's guess is correct. I can only say this much.

"Do you want me to be locked up by Captain?"

Capim's place had more than one relatively powerful Beyonder...

Indeed, he's not an ordinary human trafficker. He might be involved in many matters regarding mysticism...

Human trafficker... Could he be involved in some cult's sacrificial rite? Mr. Fool's Blessed attacked because of this?

It was roughly the same with Lanevus. It involved a cult and sacrifices, as well as the descent of the True Creator... I wonder which cult and evil god is behind Capim...

Mr. Fool's goal seems to have always been targeting these evil gods... Is it really strife between the gods? Who knows how many grand schemes of those evil gods "He" has foiled... Audrey made many connections as her heart surged with emotions.

Our Tarot Club's enemies are the evil gods!

The rest aren't qualified!

Does Mr. Fool wish to get the title of "The Nemesis of Evil Gods?" Audrey pursed her lips and chuckled softly in her heart.

Then, she suppressed her emotions and secretly made a confession.

Audrey, how can you do this? How can you use Mr. Fool as a joke...

...

At noon, when Klein returned to Minsk Street, he found, as he had expected, a letter from Old Kohler who had paid a carriage driver to deliver to his mailbox.

This was their agreed upon contact method during an emergency.

Of course, according to Klein's prediction, Old Kohler, who didn't know many words, could only use simple symbols to tell him where and when they would meet. To his surprise, it was actually written in neat writing when he opened the letter.

With a quick glance, Klein confirmed that it was identical to the handwriting in Daisy's vocabulary book.

Looks like this girl was the one who helped Old Kohler write it... This piece of paper doesn't seem to be exposed to moisture. Perhaps Old

Kohler had bought some in the event he needs to contact me urgently... Klein opened the door to the living room and read the letter.

Only taking off his hat and cane, he leaned his cane against the wall. He didn't take off his coat because the fireplace in the room wasn't lit yet, and the early November cold was silently seeping into his bones.

The letter was simple; after all, Daisy didn't know many words either.

She thanked the detective for his kindness and good intentions before telling him that she safely returned home, and she finally said, in a tactful way, that she hoped he would bring her vocabulary book with him the next time he came to East Borough.

What a polite girl... Klein chuckled. He snapped his fingers and burned the letter, leaving no clues behind.

He decided to return to East Borough the next day and return the book to Daisy, as well as reimburse Old Kohler for the cost of the letter delivery letters, paper, and fountain pens.

With this in mind, he couldn't help but sigh and chortle.

"Captain, now it's my turn to approve the expense claims of others..."

Without wasting any time, he went out again and went straight to the Quelaag Club, where Dr. Aaron was seen more often during Friday afternoons. Klein wanted to ask about Will Auceptin, the child who had played with tarot cards.

After entering the Quelaag Club in Hillston Borough, Klein said to the red-vested attendant, "A cup of marquis black tea and a serving of dessert. Send it to the corner seat of the main hall. Dr. Aaron, Reporter Mike, and the others are sitting there."

Klein had already spotted the relatively cold and famous surgeon, Aaron Ceres, who was wearing gold-rimmed glasses, as well as Reporter Mike Joseph from the Daily Observer, who he had worked with twice and had a pair of charming blue eyes. He also saw the aristocratic equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont, whose frequency of appearing at the club was only second to his.

“Oh, our great detective is here, and we happened to be talking about you.” Talim stood up with a smile.

“Speaking bad things behind my back?” Klein joked.

Mike stood up and shook his hand.

“No, I want to hire you again.”

“What’s the matter this time?” Klein bowed at Dr. Aaron and sat down at their table.

Mike chuckled and said, “I’m sure you’ve read the papers? Capim has been killed off by the Hero Bandit Black Emperor, and his crimes have been exposed. What a joyous event!

“And as a reporter, I need to have an acumen for the news. I plan to get a list of names of the girls who were rescued in East Borough from the police department to interview them. Then, I’ll paint Capim’s most cruel, most evil, and most unforgivable side to the readers of the newspaper. Of course, the victims must remain anonymous.”

He paused for a moment and suppressed his voice.

“I also have a hidden objective, or should I say, I wish to use the interview to know if these girls or their family know any relatively special friends. Who knows, that might be Hero Bandit Black Emperor!”

You’ve found the right person... The corners of Klein’s mouth almost twitched.

He smiled at Mike and said, “We’ve already worked together on East Borough’s matters. We have sufficient familiarity and trust, so I have no reason to decline.”

“I hope for a pleasant partnership.” Mike stretched out his hand. “We’ll start tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, and we’ll be paid the same as last time for a total of ten pounds.”

At that moment, Dr. Aaron, who had been listening by the side, said, “Sherlock, I want to hire you as well. This evening, or after dinner.”

It looks like my business is improving recently... Klein asked, amused, "Will it conflict with Mike's request?"

"No." Aaron shook his head. "My luck recently has been pretty good. This makes me suspect that my bout of bad luck was because of that child's inverted Wheel of Fortune card and the words he said. I'm very troubled and puzzled in this regard. I swear to god that I was very nice to him, and I treated him with the best of intentions. Why would he treat me that way? I wish to visit him at his place and confirm that he didn't do it on purpose. However, I'm ultimately afraid that something similar would happen again or some accident might occur. Therefore, I wish to hire you to protect me. Just for tonight. It won't conflict with Mike's request. How about it?"

That's what I wanted to do! After challenging the impossible and doing good deeds, my moral standing has become pretty good... Am I really going to become the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck? Klein was pleasantly surprised as he said with a reserved smile, "No problem, we can talk about the remuneration."

...

City of Silver.

Derrick Berg once again examined the translucent worm with twelve circles, the remains of Amon's avatar.

He had originally wanted to ask Mr. Fool what this was exactly, but considering how he had already troubled this godlike figure once, he couldn't bring himself to ask as he abandoned this plan. Now, he planned on showing it at the next Tarot Gathering and ask Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the rest.

After hiding the worm, Derrick suddenly thought of something. It was about time for the team that had gone with Shepherd Elder Lovia, to explore the half-destroyed temple of the Fallen Creator, to return—it wasn't too far from the City of Silver, and it was in a direction that they hadn't set foot in before.

He decided to take a look. There were quite a few people he knew among the expedition team.

Looking at the dark sky being lit up by streaks of lightning, Derrick didn't knock on the doors of the few acquaintances he knew. Instead, he walked along the broadest road and walked all the way to the training field at the edge of the City of Silver.

After each exploratory team returned, they were forced to stay here for a certain period of time. Not only would it be convenient for them to communicate and report on the things they encountered in the darkness, but they would also be quarantined in a tactful manner to guard against strange things that might latch onto any member's body and suddenly erupt after a certain amount of time.

This was the result of the City of Silver's two thousand years of experience. It wasn't that complicated, but it was quite useful.

As soon as he entered the training ground with the Axe of Hurricane stuffed behind his waist, Derrick Berg's eyes suddenly lit up. He saw the gorgeous Elder Lovia, who seemed to be in her thirties, as well as two familiar faces that were his age.

Due to the City of Silver's limited environment, its population was unable to grow any further. The number of people of a certain age group was an adequate number, and although Derrick wouldn't dare say he knew all of them, he had seen a majority of them before. He was classmates and partners with some of them during general education classes and on the practice grounds.

The person Derrick was most familiar with on this expedition team was Darc Regence, who had once been his patrol teammate.

The youngster named Darc was of medium height and was slightly chubby. He was strong, optimistic, and cheerful. His face often beamed with a friendly smile. Currently, he was a Sequence 8 Gladiator of the Giant pathway.

At this moment, the two parties were separated by a translucent wall that was as hard as steel, making it impossible for them to make any effective form of contact. They had to wait until the members of the

exploratory team were confirmed to have no problems before they could meet directly.

Derrick, who had become silent and withdrawn since the death of his parents, waved to Darc.

Noticing this, the Gladiator turned his head to the side and looked over.

“Darc, how was it? You didn’t encounter any danger, did you?” Derrick shouted.

The material used to create the black wall in that area came from somewhere that wasn’t far from the City of Silver and was called Dark Amber. It was hard as steel, but at the same time, it possessed a certain degree of transparency and had properties that made it good for transmitting sound. Derrick’s speech went through unobstructed.

Derrick imagined that Darc would definitely smile brightly and wave his arms out of habit, saying, “Take a look, I’m not injured at all, so shouldn’t it be obvious that we didn’t meet with any danger. It was nothing!”

Hearing his voice, Darc walked a few steps closer to the wall and answered with a smile, “No, everything went smoothly.”

Looking at his smile without any faults, Derrick suddenly felt a chill run through his body. It was just like he was camping in a ruined tower or a ruined city at night. Darkness was all around him as they accumulated into overwhelming horror.

...

Inside the Quelaag Club, Klein and Dr. Aaron agreed on the remuneration: two pounds!

I have to say that a doctor’s money sure is easy to earn... If it were me in the past, such a request would have cost at most 10 soli... Klein, who already had the intention to take the mission, sighed in his heart.

He remembered that during his time with the Nighthawks, he had heard Corpse Collector Frye mention that famous doctors had very high incomes.

At the time, in a response that was unlike the poet, Leonard Mitchell, he said that as far as he knew, if a house was bought in a busy borough in Backlund for a storefront, the quickest option would be to turn it into a clinic.

They agreed to call on Will Auceptin's place after dinner. It wasn't three o'clock in the afternoon, so the equestrian teacher, Talim, gathered the three of them together at a table, and they began playing a game of Upgrade, the game which was invented by Emperor Roselle.

What I expected was to play tennis, practice shooting, flip through the books in the library, and live a healthy life... But why did it become like this... Klein spontaneously thought in between the card game.

Frankly, with his current accomplishments in "magic," he could've easily cleared out all the money Dr. Aaron, Reporter Mike, and Talim had on them.

But I'm an honest man, and I believe more in my skills and luck... As the red-vested attendant shuffled the cards, Klein picked up a cream cracker and took a savory bite.

He couldn't help but marvel from the bottom of his heart, *This is life!*

During the game, Klein noticed one thing—the equestrian teacher, Talim, was no longer in a daze or as upset as he was before.

Has the matter of his friend falling in love with someone he shouldn't have been resolved? Klein thought curiously as he sipped the marquis black tea.

As a detective, he knew that this wasn't something he should ask in front of others, so he restrained himself and concentrated on his card game.

By five o'clock, Mike Joseph had to go back to his company, so the game was suspended and Klein won five soli.

My luck has been quite good recently... While Klein sighed with relief, he saw Dr. Aaron leave the table for the washroom. He controlled his voice and said with a low laugh, "Talim, has your friend's problem been settled?"

Talim, who was throwing the cards in his hands onto the table, paused for a second before sighing with a smile.

“You could say so.”

He added with a certain desire to continue, “Actually, it wasn’t too serious. It was because I was thinking too much at the time.

“Simply put, it was an illustrious young gentleman who fell in love with a commoner. You should know that a man of such status has to marry a noble lady. Heh, to him, not even the daughter of a rich man can do.”

So that’s how it is... To think that I made up all sorts of contrived and bizarre stories, such as falling in love with a man, a monster, or a person that isn’t permitted because of moral principles... Klein was disappointed and said with a laugh, “As far as I know, gentlemen of high society don’t mind having a mistress.”

“No, Sherlock, you don’t understand. Love, do you get it? Love! That young gentleman only wants to marry that commoner woman,” Talim exclaimed with a sigh.

No, I don’t understand, I’m just a bachelor dog [1]. Klein opened his mouth, unable to respond.

Talim sighed to himself.

“For the sake of that young gentleman’s future, I once thought of asking you to find people with some miraculous abilities to covertly, heh heh... Anyways, I’m a law-abiding citizen, so it was just an idea.”

“How was the matter resolved afterward?” Klein asked with interest.

Talim picked up his highlander coffee and took a sip.

“The solution was much simpler than I thought. I went straight to the lady and told her of the dilemma. She sensibly expressed her willingness to leave the gentleman and asked for my help.

“I must say that she’s truly a considerate, kind, refined, and beautiful girl. If it wasn’t for the consideration of my identity, perhaps I would’ve knelt in front of her and kissed the back of her hand.”

“Well, it seems like I couldn’t have helped.” Klein picked up the golden-rimmed white porcelain cup of black tea.

As a visitor from Earth, he was completely uninterested in the task of breaking up couples.

However, listening to gossip was another matter altogether.

...

After having dinner at the Quelaag Club and tasting the limitedsupply of Sonia Lobsters, Klein and Dr. Aaron took the latter’s carriage to Will Auceptin’s house at 66 Dalton Street in North Borough.

This was the address that Dr. Aaron had long since memorized. He didn’t return to the hospital to look up the appropriate medical records, and according to Klein’s conjecture, any relevant information pertaining to Will Auceptin would likely have been taken away by the Nighthawks.

As a former Nighthawk, I know exactly how they do things... Klein smiled bitterly and sighed.

Pulling the doorbell, the two waited for a while before they saw the door open. A maid in a black and white dress puzzledly asked, “Gentlemen, who are you looking for?”

Seeing that Aaron was still as cold as usual, Klein took the initiative to speak up.

“We’re looking for Will Auceptin. This is his attending physician. He came back to check on his health.”

“I-I don’t know him. I’ve only been here for a few days... I’ll get my master. Please wait a moment,” the maid answered blankly.

While they were waiting, Aaron suddenly said, “I almost believed the reason you came up with just now.”

“This is a basic quality of being a detective.” Klein chuckled.

At that moment, an old gentleman in his fifties walked to the door and said with a deep voice, “Will Auceptin and his family have already moved away on...” He gave a date.

Aaron did a slight count before frowning.

“Why would they go through the trouble to move two days after being discharged from the hospital after the operation?”

He acted like he was really on a follow-up visit.

Klein was slightly puzzled and asked, “Sir, how do you know the date so clearly?”

Typically speaking, subsequent tenants would only move in after a certain period of time.

That old gentleman snappily replied, “Someone came to ask before, and I even went to look for the landlord just for that.”

The Nighthawks... Klein asked without much hope, “Do you know where Will Auceptin and his family moved to?” “No,” the old man said tersely.

“Did they leave anything behind?” Klein hesitated for a moment before continuing with his questions.

“Some stuff,” the old man took a deep breath and continued, “but they were all taken away by the previous group of people!”

Meeting colleagues truly is a helpless matter... They can always think of the things you think of ahead of time... Klein couldn’t help but sigh.

Seeing that there were no further clues, Klein and Aaron politely excused themselves and left 66 Dalton Street.

“It seems like you’ll have to wait a long time before you can resolve your doubts.” Klein turned to Dr. Aaron.

Aaron was silent for a few seconds, then he slowly let out a breath.

“After what happened just now, I’m not so troubled anymore. I’m just a doctor, and it’s good enough to mind my own affairs. I should return to do a follow-up check-up and not question the situation, what other people think, or why they’re not kind. That shouldn’t be something I should be concerned with. In the future, I should just try to maintain the relationship between a doctor and a patient as much as possible.”

“It’s for the best that you can think this way.” Klein agreed from the bottom of his heart, then he casually asked, “At the time, what was wrong with Will Auceptin’s left leg?”

“His left calf grew a strange tumor that coincidentally formed a ring that pressed down heavily onto his blood vessels.” Dr. Aaron recalled as he said, “But the kid didn’t look too upset, just a little scared, and we wanted to preserve the leg at first, but it was getting worse.”

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1. A Chinese phrase describing singles.

Chapter 386: A Nightmare

City of Silver.

Derrick Berg had no idea how he got home. All he remembered was the indescribable horror.

Darc Regence's character and behavior didn't appear too different from his former self. However, it was true that there was a change to him that was unsettling. Derrick was afraid that the City of Silver would be targeted by the evil god, the Fallen Creator; afraid that the City of Silver would be obliterated before he could become The Sun, saving it from its more than twothousand-year-long curse; and give hope and sunshine to the residents here.

At that moment in time, he hated himself for not being strong enough—that he was still only at Sequence 8.

No! I can't just watch idly! Derrick suddenly stood up, and he prepared to rush to the spire and tell the other elders of the sixmember council and Chief Colin Iliad of what he had discovered.

However, Derrick knew that such anomalies weren't suspicious. Every time they explored the depths of the darkness, the members would have a period of intense tension lasting for days, tens of days, or even more than a month.

In addition, the uninhabited desolate plains and the hopeless journey would bring about extreme depression. In addition, in order to be safe, the members of the exploratory team wouldn't be allowed to release any sexual urges that had been pent up during their excursions, which caused them to act differently after every exploration. If they ended up with more than half the team ending up dead or injured, a huge change in personality wasn't a rare occurrence.

The manner of handling such people could only be dealt with via the usual quarantine and treatment with almost zero exceptions.

The City of Silver had the first three Sequences of the Dragon pathway, so there was no lack of Psyche Analysts.

Derrick rushed to the door and suddenly slowed down.

He knew that this method of reporting to the six-member council might not be effective. It would likely arouse suspicion, and there might even be the threat of being targeted by the Shepherd, Elder Lovia.

After pacing back and forth for more than ten seconds, Derrick gritted his teeth and pulled the door open.

He felt that he had to warn the elders of the six-member council, even if it would be a huge risk for him!

For the vast majority of the residents of the City of Silver, sacrificing their lives to maintain the existence of this city and the continuation of this civilization was the belief that was ingrained into their bones.

Selfish people often didn't live long in such environments regardless of whether it was outside or inside.

Of course, Derrick wasn't completely reckless. Under the tutelage of the members of the Tarot Club, especially The Hanged Man, he clearly understood that there were times when one had to be patient, protect himself properly, and avoid unnecessary sacrifices in order to better defend the City of Silver.

I'll only talk about the abnormality I observed. It shouldn't be dangerous... Derrick consoled himself, running faster and faster.

Finally, he saw the spire that represented the highest authority in the City of Silver.

He found a Beyonder on duty and made a request to meet with the Chief.

To Derrick's surprise, the Beyonder didn't ask the usual questions. After simply passing on the information, he was led up the stairs to the Chief's room.

Very strange... It's different from before... Derrick felt that the changes in the details made him more uneasy.

Entering the room, he saw Chief Colin Iliad standing in front of a wall.

This tall elder, with his deep blue eyes and messy white hair, had his back facing two swords that hung on the wall. He wore his usual

flaxen-colored shirt and brown coat, and it was hard to believe that he was an expert who had successfully hunted many devils and monsters.

“Derrick Berg, what matter would actually require you to tell me it, face to face?” Colin asked in a deep voice.

“Your Excellency.” Derrick saluted. “I met the team that was sent to explore that temple at the training grounds today. I-I found that the Darc Regence I know has experienced a strange change. He’s no longer as cheerful as he was before, and his smile is as polite as a stranger’s. Also, Elder Lovia doesn’t frequently change the way she speaks like she usually did.”

Colin looked deeply at Derrick and asked in a low voice, “Just these two things?”

“Yes, yes.” Derrick lowered his head. “I think there might be something unusual about that.”

Colin waved his hand and said, “I got it, I’ll get Aiflor to do an investigation. You may return. In the future, you just need to report such matters to the guardian of the spire directly.”

Aiflor was the City of Silver’s most experienced Psyche Analyst who was closest to Sequence 6. It was a pity that there was no potion formula after Sequence 7.

After receiving such an answer, Derrick left gloomily.

Looking at Derrick’s back as he disappeared by the door, Colin sighed in disappointment.

...

After talking to Dr. Aaron about Will Auceptin’s situation for a while. Klein got off the carriage and took the steam metro. After three stops, he arrived near Minsk Street and switched to a trackless public carriage to return home.

As it was still early, he used divination to confirm that the previous tenant wasn’t lying, and then he diligently continued to study the Book of Secrets.

Ever since he had obtained this mysterious book, Klein's use of the mysterious space above the gray fog became more and more ingenious as he completed many more outstanding techniques.

"What limits me now is my own Sequence, my own strength, and spirituality." Late at night, Klein hid the Book of Secrets and went to the bathroom to wash up, in preparation for bed.

That night, he slept soundly. Even the church bells in the morning only made him turn over.

Winter is the best time to stay in bed... Klein grunted and got up.

To reward the Hero Bandit Black Emperor, he had a sugared hard-boiled egg and strawberry jam he specially bought to match with white bread.

Just as he was enjoying his meal, the doorbell suddenly rang.

"Didn't I tell Mike to come after breakfast?" He took a sip of the sweet soup and wiped his mouth with a napkin.

According to his agreement with Reporter Mike, he would only arrive half an hour after breakfast before they began interviewing the rescued girls of East Borough. If Mike didn't appear after half an hour, then it meant that the matter would be delayed by a day.

Klein walked to the door, but before he could reach out his hand, the outline of a visitor appeared in his mind. He wasn't Reporter Mike Joseph but Dr. Aaron Ceres.

"Good morning, Aaron. Did you sleep late last night?" Klein noticed that Aaron's face was pale, so he quietly activated his Spirit Vision to take a look.

Aaron took off his hat and cane and started to take off his coat, but the cold air in the room stopped him.

Klein laughed dryly and said, "As you know, I'll be going out today. Mike might come looking for me, so I didn't light up the fireplace."

Aaron nodded and didn't say anything else. He followed Klein into the living room, found a seat and sat down.

“Sherlock, I had a nightmare last night. I dreamed about that child, Will Auceptin!”

Nightmare? This is within the limits of my knowledge... I’m a professional when it comes to interpreting dreams, far more professional than deduction... Klein leaned forward, clasped his hands, and said, “What kind of nightmare?”

Aaron recalled and said, “There are some details and processes that I can’t remember. What I remember most is a tall, pitchblack steeple with a huge silver snake coiled around it. It was moving slowly, looking at me with its cold, merciless red eyes.

“I don’t know why, but I entered the steeple, and I would go up the stairs and, at other times, down the stairs, going through walls after walls, and one locked door after another. Finally, I found the child called Will Auceptin in a dark corner. He hopped a few steps on one leg and curled up against the wall, with tarot cards scattered everywhere beside him.

“When he saw me, he was scared and happy. He called out, ‘Dr. Aaron’... The whole dream was roughly like that before I woke up.”

Klein listened attentively and thought for a while before asking, “Did Will Auceptin say anything else?”

Aaron frowned in thought before suddenly saying, “Yes, he said, ‘Dr. Aaron, a snake wants to eat me!’

“Following that, a giant silver snake hung down from the ceiling, its head facing me...

“Its mouth was very big, but it has no teeth, no tongue, and it was completely blood-red!”

Silver giant snake... A pitch-black steeple... Will Auceptin protected under layers of protection... Klein said to Dr. Aaron in a measured voice, “It’s not a very strange dream. It likely has you subconsciously sensing some kind of predicament he was in while you were talking to Will Auceptin, that he was being threatened by something. That’s why you dreamed of something like this: a child hiding in the depths of a

tall steeple, behind countless walls and doors, huge silver snakes coiling around the top of the steeple...

“Heh heh, as a detective, we know a little bit of psychology. It’s also often talked about in the newspapers.

“What I don’t understand is why you didn’t have such a dream until today.”

Klein didn’t lie about his interpretation, but he didn’t reveal the possible true reasons behind it.

Aaron opened his mouth and said, “I was in too much of a hurry just now and forgot to mention something.”

As he spoke, he took out a leather wallet and took out a fairly exquisitely folded paper crane.

“After realizing that Will Auceptin and his family had moved away, I remembered that he had given me this before he left the hospital, saying, ‘Doctor, this will bring you good luck.’

“I didn’t pay much attention to it at the time and casually threw it into the office drawer. After parting with you last night, I went to retrieve it and put it in my wallet. As a result, I had a nightmare that very night.”

Klein looked at the paper crane, nodded thoughtfully and said, “Dr. Aaron, it looks like Will Auceptin didn’t deliberately bring you bad luck. He had made up for it later. The paper crane invented by Emperor Roselle is meant to act as symbolism for wishing you well; besides, he said it would bring you good luck.”

Aaron subconsciously asked, “Origami was invented by Emperor Roselle?”

I don’t know if it’s him, but I think it’s likely him... Klein smiled. “Probably.”

Aaron was relieved by Klein's explanation and reassurance, and he prepared to observe for a few more days to see if there were any more nightmares such as this.

After sending the famous surgeon out of the door with a smile, Klein's expression suddenly became solemn, as if he was thinking about something.

There was no problem with his interpretation of the dream. The pitch-black steeple, the walls and doors that blocked his path, and the giant silver snake, they all symbolized that Will Auceptin was in a situation where he was threatened by something that symbolized the child's fear and helplessness, as well as his attempts to hide behind layers of protection.

But the problem was that this was unlikely to be a revelation Dr. Aaron's spirituality had received on its own. Otherwise, he wouldn't have had such a dream only until last night, or when he found the paper crane. A similar development should've taken place long before Will Auceptin was discharged, back when his spirituality unconsciously became aware of the particularly strange developments, allowing him to have similar experiences as he had now.

Therefore, Klein suspected that the medium which instilled the dream into Dr. Aaron was the paper crane!

Klein activated his Spirit Vision to carefully observe this handicraft, but he didn't find any spiritual brilliance. However, his spiritual perception and intuition told him that there was something strange about this piece of origami. Certain magical aspects that might involve the most illusory, most difficult to comprehend, and most worthy of fear and reverence—fate.

That child called Will Auceptin isn't simple... It seems like the most amazing thing wasn't the tarot card, but rather he himself... The giant silver snake is a symbol of danger, and this matter is related to bad luck, good luck, and other elements. Could it be that it represents the Snake of Mercury, Sequence 1 of the Monster pathway? Klein's thoughts wandered, but he couldn't be certain of anything.

He turned to question the problem of how the dream was instilled.

With Klein's accomplishments in mysticism, this wasn't something that was too complicated or difficult to understand. He quickly came up with an idea.

The first thing to do was to rule out the influence of specters and wraiths, which would've stained Dr. Aaron's aura with a blackishgreen color of varying degrees, and I didn't see any sign of that just now.

There are two main ways of instilling information without causing the owner of the dream to appear abnormal. One of them is using the Beyonder powers of a Nightmare like Captain. An objective is met through guidance, and it wouldn't involve the culprit; otherwise, traces would similarly be left behind. The second method would be even more ingenious and advanced.

The principle of a dreamland is that of Astral Projections traveling through the spirit world, and the details that one would normally unwittingly notice, under external stimulation, would turn into a symbolic revelation. Or, they can obtain some enlightenment directly related to themselves from external sources. Then, their Soul Bodies, and subsequently their Spirit Bodies would be informed of this. Because the owner of the body was in a state of sleep, this will appear in the form of a dream.

So the second way is to instill it into the spirit world!

First, use some magical method to create the revelation that one will need, and then naturally let the target's Astral Projection obtain and feedback the information while roaming the spirit world. That way, the target will be able to dream of the scene that others would want them to dream of, and there will be no superficial traces.

This is something that I'm currently unable to do, even if it's a Spirit Body that's able to partially wield some of the power above the gray fog.

Klein paused for a moment and then added another possibility.

A seed was planted in Dr. Aaron's subconscious through the paper crane, and once he found it, he would have the corresponding dream.

That's easy to confirm. As long as I use mediumship on Dr. Aaron, I should be able to find traces of it... However, would it be unfriendly to use mediumship on him? Or should I borrow the Mental Terror Candle from Father Utravsky? No, the one who recognized me was that vampire, the zealous doll lover, Emlyn White, not the muscular, giant-like Father Utravsky... Klein reined in his thoughts and considered his subsequent actions.

He decided that he would wait until he went above the gray fog to divine the level of danger. If it was an acceptable level, he would sneak into Dr. Aaron's house tonight, use the Dream Charm and other methods to secretly observe him, and see if the source of the dreamland was a result of direct guidance or an indirect fabrication.

However, with Klein's strength and level, it would be difficult to find traces of the latter. Even he himself didn't have much confidence.

This didn't mean that his Astral Projection could travel the same spirit world as Dr. Aaron's Astral Projection by sitting next to him and entering Cogitation. This required a sufficient amount of locking on to do so.

According to the descriptions in the Book of Secrets, the existence of the spirit world was quite magical. It completely overlapped with the real world, so everyone could obtain revelations from the spirit world at any time. However, the spirit world didn't distinguish between directions, and the past, present, or future could even intersect there. It was like infinite knowledge, information, and illusions were spiritually gathered and compressed into a strange sea. It was different from the "world" as one would imagine according to usual concepts or logic.

As a result of this, the revelations that one received from the spirit world could only be a variety of symbols, not direct answers. And precisely because of this, every Astral Projection's experience of traveling in the spirit world was not only related to their physical location and time, but it was also dependent on the current state of their body and the mind. Without locking on to the corresponding location, it made it impossible to lock onto and find a person's Astral Projection in the spirit world, even if one was physically next to them.

This was also the reason why the Astral Projection's movement in the spirit world was limited and one doesn't dare to venture too deep. Once it got lost and was unable to return to its body, its owner would become a retard and, even more seriously, a vegetable.

It was even more difficult to use the spirit world as a springboard for transference. If one wasn't careful, then they would lose their way and never be able to return to the real world until they rot to death.

Phew... Klein exhaled, temporarily throwing the question to the back of his mind.

He took out his pocket watch and looked at the time. He realized that he had been thinking too long, that his breakfast had already turned completely cold, and that the fact that Reporter Mike hadn't arrived yet meant that the commission was likely to be delayed by a day.

In the spirit of not wasting anything, Klein finished the rest of his meal and then went above the gray fog to make a divination. He was surprised to find that there were no revelations indicating danger at all.

After doing all of this, the appointed time had passed. Without any hesitation, he changed into a heavy jacket, put on his cap, grabbed the vocabulary book, and left 15 Minsk Street.

His initial plan was to accompany Mike Joseph to East Borough for an interview and find an opportunity to hint at Old Kohler to not mention his promise of helping Liv find her daughter.

As for Liv's family, he let Old Kohler do the reminding.

And now, after Mike had pushed back the interview by a day, Klein was even more at ease, no longer worried about any mishaps or mistakes.

...

With the address mentioned by Old Kohler, and according to the revelation from divination, Klein entered the depths of East Borough, and under the watchful, wary, numb, or greedy gaze of the crowds, he found the room on the third floor.

There were two bunk beds here, and there were also some old and worn bedding on the floor. Every empty space was filled with sundries.

Klein looked directly at the bottom bunk of the innermost bunk and called out, “Old Kohler.”

With a swoosh, Old Kohler sat up and leaned towards the door in pleasant surprise, “You really came. After sending you that letter yesterday, I already guessed that you would come looking for me today, so I didn’t go to the dock. I’ve been waiting at home all this time.”

Well, I don’t have to think about how to fabricate the lie about why I came straight here to find you... Klein looked around and said, “Old Kohler, with your current income, you can definitely rent a better room and move to a better place. Why did you only change your bed from the floor to a bunk bed?”

“Most of the money is for gathering information for you.” Old Kohler laughed. “And I’m no longer young. I need to save some money for the future when my future health wanes.”

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, “You can consider buying some insurance, such as a Single Elder Aid Policy. They can give you the money that can at least fill your stomach and a room for you to sleep in every week when you’re really old.

The insurance industry of this world had sprouted in the Fourth Epoch. After being promoted by Emperor Roselle, it had matured quite a bit. There were various kinds of insurance such as the various insurances for maritime trade, fire insurance, injury insurance, long-term care insurance in different names, and so on. They were mostly targeted at the rich and the middle-class.

“I know. When I was a worker, I paid a premium of three pence a week, but after I lost my income...” Old Kohler sighed.

His biggest problem now was that his income was unstable, and he wondered when the money he received from the detective would be cut off.

Klein couldn't promise anything either. He pointed outside and said, "Let's go to Liv's house and return the vocabulary book to the girl."

After leaving the room, Klein casually mentioned, "What a joke. I was talking about doing volunteer work the day before yesterday and volunteered to help find Daisy, but she ended up being sent back by the police yesterday. Please don't mention it again, I don't want to be laughed at."

"Alright." Old Kohler agreed first, then he said, "No one will laugh at your kindness."

After walking through the dirty streets, they arrived at Liv's house. Klein saw that the girl who had just been rescued had started ironing again, and he saw that the clothes here were hanging down and dripping with water. It was just as it was before. He was momentarily at a loss as to what to say. "Daisy." After a while, he said, "Your vocabulary book."

Daisy's eyes lit up, but she was too busy to leave. After busying herself for quite a while, she stopped working and went to the door, thanking him profusely.

After Liv and Freja had also put down their work and come over to express their gratitude, Klein repeated what he had just said to Old Kohler.

After receiving positive responses, he took out the two pounds worth of change that he had prepared and handed it to Liv.

"There will be a reporter coming to interview Daisy tomorrow. This is the advance of the payment he's giving, but don't mention it in front of him; otherwise, things will become complicated. Heh heh, maybe he will give more tomorrow, but not that much."

"This, no—I'm willing to expose that bad guy's evil deeds. I don't want money!" Daisy shook her head.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"This is a rule. You can't break rules, understand?" He looked at Liv and said, "Take it.

“Your belief is right. It’s only if Daisy and Freja learn more words and learn more things will you all escape from this situation.”

He was going to suggest that Liv’s family should move to the edge of East Borough. Customers who could afford to hire others to do their laundry wouldn’t live in East Borough, but in the end, he didn’t mention it.

He had intended to provide them with more help, but he restrained himself.

There were thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people like Liv and her family in East Borough. Even if one was a wealthy banker who wanted to help them, they wouldn’t be able to make a splash. Besides, this was just East Borough. There was still the entire Backlund and the Loen Kingdom.

“...Thank you, and help me thank the reporter for me.” Liv was silent for a moment, then she took the money.

Klein didn’t stay for long. He quickly left as if there was a ghost that would devour his soul.

After walking outside with Old Kohler, he turned around and suddenly sighed. He said in a low voice, “There are no supreme

saviors [1]...”

---

1. This is a line from The Internationale, a left-wing anthem.

"What?" Old Kohler asked, not hearing him clearly.

Klein looked at the potholed road in front of him and said in a self-deprecating manner, "Nothing.

"I hope Liv's family can get out of this situation and live in better conditions."

He had indeed voiced out his thoughts. Being one of the inheritors of the Foodaholic Empire's new era, it was perfectly normal for him to think of a revolution, to mobilize the masses, and to change the world. However, when he thought about the details, he felt that he couldn't save himself just by relying on the poor. This was because Beyonder forces existed in this world. Furthermore, they were relatively supernatural and couldn't be resolved simply by firearms. For instance, Sequence 5 of the Mutant pathway.

That was just one aspect of things. Another aspect of things was due to the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation. Due to the limited access to ingredients, Beyonder forces couldn't become commonplace, making it difficult to convert the advantage of numbers into effective combat power. And even if it could be spread, as long as the problem of losing control wasn't resolved, then it would still bring about disaster.

If there weren't any High-Sequence Beyonders, then there would actually be ways to deal with all of this to a certain extent. However, in the real world, not only were there demigods, but there were also Sealed Artifacts that could kill people without them even knowing how they died. Besides, deities were real and they stood high and lofty.

In this way, the poor would use strikes and street protests to fight back. However, once they took up weapons and established an army, they would be met with an unstoppable counterattack. It wasn't impossible for a large-scale natural disaster to occur, one that would affect people psychologically.

The only ones that were on par with the official Beyonder organizations were mostly secret organizations. Typically, they were

related to evil forces, so by joining hands with them, death might not even be the most tragic ending. Therefore, to embark on the path of revolution, the most hopeful road to success was to get the support of one or more Churches.

How many concessions could be obtained through simple strikes and street protests while still meeting the vested interests of those involved? Bribery would be much easier... However, the incident regarding the True Creator, who almost made use of the miserable situations of the poor to descend upon Backlund, has seemed to stir the Church of Evernight and the nobles who were aware of the situation. I can see that from the investigation mission that Mike had accepted and the information provided by Miss Justice... Klein's thoughts lingered on East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district.

In the end, he couldn't help but let out a laugh and sigh in his heart.

After all the ideas that come to me, it seems that only through the threat of an evil god's descent can the poor's situation be improved.

However, the evil gods are also the ones who can't wait to draw on their flesh and blood, existences that devour their souls; they're the ones most likely to bring a disaster that no one can escape from.

What wonderful irony.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

As Dr. Escalante had upcoming matters she had to attend to, Audrey had brought forward her second psychology lesson for the week.

Susie, more excited than she was, had long rushed into the study, even leaving the ball game she usually loved the most aside.

Audrey purposely displayed her curiosity during this lesson, occasionally asking Escalante about psychology related to mysticism.

At the end of the lesson, Escalante finally spoke after some deliberation, "Miss Audrey, we've organized a seminar on this subject. Many members have specialized in the intersecting field of psychology and mysticism. Are you interested in joining?"

“Of course!” Audrey nodded and answered without the slightest sign of hesitation. It perfectly matched her predetermined innocent and curious personality that she had set for herself.

Escalante smiled.

“Remember to keep this a secret. You know that your elders have a strong prejudice against the study of mysticism. I’ll bring you there for the next lesson.”

“No problem.” Audrey gave her consent with a hint of excitement.

After sending off Escalante, whose hair reached her waist, out the study, she closed the door behind her, faced the mirror by the bookcase, and remained silent for two seconds.

Following that, she lifted up her skirt and took a step and did a swirl from a court dance. Then, looking at herself in the mirror, she sweetly smiled and said, “Audrey, you’re great!”

Audrey knew that she had taken the first step in entering the Psychology Alchemists. Although the seminar was most likely an outer circle, and there would definitely be a lot of tests to follow, this really made her open the door to the Psychology Alchemists.

In the process, she didn’t borrow strength from the outside world, but instead, she relied solely on her observation and performance to perfectly hide it from Psychiatrist Dr. Escalante. Therefore, she was very proud of herself.

“That seminar sounds interesting.” Susie leaned over and wagged her tail. “Audrey, can I join?”

Join? Looking at this golden retriever with its wicked round eyes, Audrey immediately sank into deep thought.

She dragged out a terse acknowledgment.

“I can’t do it at the moment, Susie. Y-you’re too conspicuous...”

At this point, she changed the topic of their conversation and said with a slight smile, “But I can bring you along.”

...

On Saturday night, taking his Master Key and his black cane, Klein walked out of 15 Minsk Street. Without the latter, he didn't think that he would be able to return today.

He was going to "find" Dr. Aaron, enter his dream, and find out how the nightmare regarding Will Auceptin came about.

As for where Dr. Aaron lived, he had already found out yesterday —3 Burningham Road, Hillston Borough.

By the time Klein arrived, it was past eleven o'clock and the neighborhood was dark and silent.

After tossing a coin and performing a divination, Klein passed through the outer bars, walked around to the side, and used the Master Key to open up an invisible passage through the wall into the dark corridor.

With his agile steps, he quietly went up to the second floor and hid in an empty guest room.

When it was clear that Dr. Aaron and his wife were asleep, Klein entered their bedroom through the wall.

The first thing he did was take out a Slumber Charm and mutter the incantation, making Dr. Aaron's wife really fall asleep, preventing her from suddenly waking up and disturb what he would subsequently do to her husband.

Then, Klein sat down on a chair in front of the dresser, held the Dream Charm in his hand, and whispered a word in ancient Hermes, "Crimson!"

As soon as he finished saying that, he felt the charm in his palm become light, as though it had become a weightless illusion.

As his spirituality poured in, a transparent flame wrapped around the charm, burning a deep and serene black.

Driven by Klein's will, the blackness spread out, enveloping both Dr. Aaron and himself.

Klein quickly entered a Cogitation state and saw the endless darkness and the single oval-shaped light.

His spirituality extended out and touched that illusory and hazy object.

The world around him suddenly turned upside down and twisted, and Klein found himself on a barren plain, with pitchblack stones at his feet and not even a blade of grass.

In the center of the plain stood a black steeple with a huge silver snake coiled around it. It had its head reared up, and its red eyes stared coldly in their direction.

Unlike what Dr. Aaron had described, the silver serpent had no physical scales, and its body was covered in dense patterns and symbols. They were all connected to each other into what seemed like wheels, and there were different symbols around each wheel.

The giant snake's tail and head's wheels were each halved, looking incongruous, as though they could kill a person with obsessive-compulsive disorder, but Klein imagined that if the giant silver snake could bite its own tail with its mouth, the wheel would be complete. It wouldn't be disconnected, and there wouldn't be any more changes.

Next to Klein, Dr. Aaron stared blankly ahead, moving closer and closer to the dark steeple.

I can now confirm that no one is guiding Dr. Aaron... That excludes Nightmare Beyonder powers... Klein quickly made a judgment.

He didn't stop Dr. Aaron, but he followed him towards the black steeple and the silver snake.

The two of them had only taken a few steps when their target had already appeared before them. The giant silver snake had its upper body bent down, as though it was considering how to enjoy the dessert that was delivered to its mouth.

Its mouth opened wide, but there was no putrid smell coming from it. Its red eyes were cold and merciless, looking at everything like they were nothing more than prey; yet, it didn't have the slightest hint of bloodlust or cruelty.

In front of it, everything seemed puny and equal because of their insignificance.

In the end, the serpent didn't launch an attack. Klein followed Dr. Aaron through an old, rotting wooden door and into the darkness of the tower.

As Aaron had told him, the layout was abnormally confusing and chaotic. The stairs spiraled up and down, and the halls, libraries, and rooms were normal, inverted, and some were embedded in other parts. It was a building that couldn't possibly exist in the real world.

After passing through the doors and walls, Klein had no idea where he was in the black tower. Perhaps he had reached the top or perhaps the basement.

In the rich darkness, he suddenly noticed a figure curled up in the corner in front of him.

The figure, sensing Dr. Aaron's approach, scrambled to its feet, hopping over on one leg.

It was only when the figure was very close did Klein clearly see him. He looked dignified and strong, in his early teens, and had an expression of obvious fear.

The figure was about 1.4 meters tall, and his left calf was missing. It was obvious that he was the child who had undergone surgery, Will Auceptin.

In his hand was a deck of tarot cards. His pitch-black eyes were filled with surprise and joy, as well as fear and horror.

"Dr. Aaron, a snake wants to eat me!"

Suddenly, he let out a blood-curdling scream as the image of a huge, mysterious silver snake was reflected in his eyes.

Whoosh!

The tarot cards in his hand fell to the ground, leaving only one card tightly gripped in his palm.

Klein focused his gaze over it and saw that there was, similarly, a wheel on the card.

It was the Wheel of Fortune card.

Whoosh!

The dream shattered instantly, and Klein found himself still sitting in a chair in front of the dresser.

Author's Notes:

In September, not only did not break more, update on time, but also added more four or five times, I didn't count the specific number. In short, I have fulfilled the promise, and you also let the *Lord of Mysteries* ranked third on the monthly list, this is a highest monthly ticket ranking of mine.

Simply say about a monthly ticket, then talk about the book itself.

The second volume was written, my greatest feeling is that the plot is fragmentary, but this is also an expected thing. I hope to unfold the world and show you the details everywhere, so that the setting can become the flesh and blood of the world and let it seems more lively and more realistic. So there must be more characters and more branches to build more lines to describe the world. This may slow the overall rhythm, but I can only say that if I choose this idea, I have to kneel down and try to achieve it.

The first volume can string all the clues together and turn them into a complete medium-length story, which has a strong sense of explosion. In fact, the second volume can actually do the same. But after I thought about it, I gave up this plan and changed the form. Because Tingen is very small and everything is not abrupt when putting together, while Backlund has many Beyonder and forces. If all the clues are put together in one incident, it will appear small, It looks like Backlund will be small, and the world will be small and the pattern will be small.

Well, one of the purposes of *Lord of Mysteries* is to break through the limitations of the past. No matter whether the Destruction of Fortune, Throne of Magical Arcana, or The Sage Who Transcended Samsara, there is no problem in the world structure itself. It can even be said that some creativity and strength systems are also good (proud face). However, the problem is that it is not detailed enough. The bottom

layer of the whole world is empty, giving people a feeling of unreality. Therefore, before writing *Lord of Mysteries*, I was thinking, I want you to imagine what kind of life every Beyonder usually lives, what kind of difficulties they will encounter, how they interact with ordinary people, and what kind of life ordinary people live, and what kind of impact they will have on the extraordinary world, which I want to write down.

Therefore, I, who am not an economics major, can only take the price data of the Victorian era for reference, so that you can see that there are such a world and such a life.

It's always emphasized that how many pounds and how many soli are there, not only the problem of authenticity, but also the most intuitive description of social stratification so that some things will come to pass. I used to worry about how to integrate the Cthulhu style into the world of Steampunk, how to show the evil spirits, and after reading the data, there is no such doubt in my heart. If there is an evil spirit, that era will inevitably give birth to evil spirits.

In addition, many of the contrast itself contain strong stories, just like Mrs. Landlord.

This inspiration comes from my most real feelings. I remember that I first read the information about the lives of poor people in the Victorian era. I only felt that they had a hard time and had to haggle over every penny because it meant a meal or even a day's food. Then I read these monographs on middle-class marriage research, which contained detailed housewives' expenses. I immediately felt that this was totally different from the poor. A banquet cost 4 or 5 pounds, a weekly cost of several pounds, single-family or row houses, clothes, education, servants, etc.

After reading it, I deeply felt that the gold pounds at that time were really valuable, earning 200 to 300 pounds a year and 400 to 500 pounds a year, I could live quite well.

With this kind of mood, I turned over a book on the life of Victorian aristocrats and big businessmen, the first part of the opening told me like this:

A trained foxhound costs 400 to 700 pounds, and a Lord keeps 30 and changes them every year.

My mood at that time should be the mood when you saw the plot, regardless of the narration, let you feel my mood at that time directly with the plot.

All right, I've talked a lot and summarized a lot. In October, I hope I can take back some lines and write down some major plots. Today there will be three shifts, then a few days later, and then there will be three shifts. It can't reduce the quality in order to add more, right? I also need rest, and I hope everyone can continue to support me.

Finally, don't forget to vote for the moon, double during the National Day! If you are thrown away, you will not be able to recover it.

Chapter 389: Nighthawk

The crimson moon outside the window was obscured by the clouds, its moonlight that penetrated through the curtain barely outlined the large objects in the bedroom. The darkness and intensity became the main theme of the room.

Klein sat in such an environment and was in no hurry to leave.

He looked at the sleeping Dr. Aaron and began to analyze the images he had seen in the dream.

Will Auceptin eventually held the Wheel of Fortune card in his hand. And in such a dream, everything symbolizes something. It's a revelation obtained by one's Astral Projection... In other words, Will Auceptin's matter is related to fate. Furthermore, that giant silver snake might very well represent the Snake of Mercury. This child might actually be related to a High-Sequence Beyonder, be of the Monster pathway, or some strange Sealed Artifact...

Does his danger stem from the Snake of Mercury or the result of greed due to the strange Sealed Artifact?

But the Snake of Mercury is Sequence 1. It's an existence closest to that of a god. Just its name on its own is an embodiment of "His" high level. It's impossible that "He" can't do anything to a child like Will Auceptin. That Amon who is of an unknown Sequence number—perhaps Sequence 1, 2, or 3—could even invade the space above the gray fog with just an avatar...

This matter doesn't seem to be that simple. There must be a huge secret behind his matter.

At this thought, Klein had already decided to pull back completely.

It's obviously a very dangerous matter. Furthermore, that tarot card might not be a mystical item. What's special might very well be Will Auceptin himself. Yes, apart from having nightmares, Dr. Aaron's troubles are already settled. There's no reason for me to get involved in it. To proactively act on this and challenge the impossible is nearly identical to suicide... Hmm, yes, I must follow what my heart tells me!

Klein pushed the surface of the dressing table with his black-gloved right hand and slowly stood up.

Having just entered the dream, he was completely convinced that Dr. Aaron's nightmare came from a revelation that his Astral Projection had received in the spirit world. And that revelation had been deliberately created and provided by a highlevel existence. The paper crane was just a tool for locating him.

According to a chapter in the Book of Secrets, Klein could also try to use the paper crane to find Dr. Aaron's Astral Projection in the spirit world and observe the source of the revelation, but he had already decided to not get involved.

Stretching his body, Klein flipped through Dr. Aaron's leather wallet with the last of his curiosity, and he took out the paper crane.

He placed the paper crane on the tip of his cane, and he held them simultaneously. Then, his eyes turned deep as he softly muttered to himself, "Will Auceptin's current location."

After the divination sentence was repeated seven times, a breeze suddenly blew in the room, bringing with it a cool feeling as if it were blowing on one's soul.

Klein let go of his right palm, and the cane stood firm before falling down with the paper cranes, pointing diagonally at the bed.

"There..." Klein frowned and moved to another position. He repeated the divination and successfully received his feedback.

And the intersection point of the two divinations was Dr. Aaron!

Will Auceptin's position overlaps with that of Dr. Aaron... That's interesting... Klein said to himself, amused and amazed.

His curiosity was piqued to the extreme.

Although he didn't intend to get involved in this matter, he wanted to know why there was an overlapping situation such as this.

Hmm... Why don't I bring the paper crane above the gray fog for divination. With the gray fog's obstruction, there won't be any accidents... Klein quickly came up with a new idea.

Since it wasn't convenient for him to summon himself in Dr. Aaron's bedroom, he decided to take the paper crane home first.

He had actually long prepared for this. Before coming, Klein couldn't confirm the seriousness of the matter, and he had hoped to find Will Auceptin, seeing if he had the opportunity to obtain the tarot card. Therefore, he had prepared another paper crane to replace the real one. It made it easier for him to do all sorts of divination, and he could switch it back once the problem was resolved.

As soon as he thought of it, Klein took out the paper crane he had prepared.

He had deliberately folded it above the gray fog, just in case Dr. Aaron had suddenly decided to hand over anything related to Will Auceptin to the Church of Evernight, allowing his counterfeit to be divined.

Taking into account the overall picture and the details would make things much easier... Klein praised himself.

With the help of the faint moonlight, he carefully compared Will Auceptin's paper crane and his, to see if there were any clear differences.

Upon comparing them, Klein immediately fell silent.

His handicraft skills weren't even comparable to a child's...

In fact, they're all paper cranes, so there isn't much of a difference. Mine is only a little cruder. As long as Aaron hadn't studied the original one carefully, then he wouldn't be able to tell that it has been swapped... Klein muttered silently to himself, took out a coin, and used divination to make a final confirmation.

After receiving a revelation that confirmed this, he put his paper crane back into Aaron's wallet and returned it to its original position. He then took care of the scene, bringing Will Auceptin's paper crane along with him and left 3 Birmingham Road.

With the help of the dowsing rod, Klein successfully returned home. While he was taking a bath, he summoned himself and brought the paper crane along with the Master Key above the gray fog.

Sitting in the quiet and empty palace hall, he picked up the paper crane and carefully examined it for a few seconds, but he didn't discover anything abnormal.

Then, with a pen and paper, Klein wrote the same divination sentence as before: "Will Auceptin's current location."

This time, he switched to using dream divination, and he was pleasantly surprised to see an image appear in the world of the gray fog.

It was a dark room. A strong and dignified Will Auceptin leaned against the desk with the help of a chair by the window, and he looked out at the scenery with his pitch-black eyes.

He held a stack of tarot cards in each hand, and beside them, there was a pile of wooden blocks.

The wooden blocks formed a ring-shaped snake that connected itself from head to tail.

The scene outside the window was just as dark, and there was the faint sound of flowing water.

The dream ended here without a sound. Klein opened his eyes, tapped the edge of the long bronze table with his finger, and he said to himself, *That Ouroboros-like snake is indeed the Snake of Mercury? That means it's the Snake of Mercury which represents fate...*

There was the sound of running water outside the window. Does that mean that Will Auceptin's current position is close to the Tussock River?

Previously, when I divined his position, was the overlap with Dr. Aaron caused due to interference by fate?

Seeing that divination above the gray fog could only receive a revelation of this degree, Klein was no longer troubled by curiosity. He barely interpreted the situation and planned to exchange the paper crane tomorrow night. He would then find an opportunity to guide Dr. Aaron and have him go to the Church of Evernight to tell the bishop about this matter.

It's best to leave such matters to the officials... Klein let out a chuckle and returned to the real world.

After taking a leisurely bath, he didn't get busy and crawled into bed.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly realized that he was clearly dreaming. He was in the living room, reading the Book of Secrets.

This... this familiar feeling... He turned his head to look at the door like he usually did.

The door creaked open, and a figure in a gray coat walked in.

He was about thirty years old, with a long, thin face with a broad forehead, and dark blue eyes that looked intelligent.

It's not the Captain... Klein suddenly gave a self-deprecating laugh, let out a silent breath, and turned the Book of Secrets in his hand into a copy of Ladies Aesthetic.

He flipped through the magazine, casually greeting the newcomer.

The man in the gray coat took off his hat and sat down across him, seemingly casually asking him, "Aaron came to see you this morning?"

It's really is a Nighthawk, a Nightmare... Klein resisted the urge to sigh and replied with a smile, "Yes."

He had already figured out why the Nighthawk had suddenly entered his dream.

The Nightmare in front of him was likely the Captain of the Nighthawks team responsible for the matter regarding Will Auceptin, but they had yet to find any useful clues up to date.

In this case, Dr. Aaron and Detective Sherlock Moriarty's act of visiting to ask about Will Auceptin's whereabouts must've been made known to them last night or this morning. At the same time, they discovered that Dr. Aaron rushed over to Minsk Street, shortly after he finished his breakfast, to visit Detective Sherlock Moriarty.

In the spirit of professionalism, entering a person's dream at night was the most natural and normal development. As for Dr. Aaron, his situation was rather sensitive, so rashly entering a dream might cut off clues, so there was no doubt that a certain detective became the first choice.

"What did he encounter?" the captain of the Nighthawks team asked "casually."

Klein answered honestly, "He had a nightmare..."

Klein described the pitch-black tower, the giant silver snake, and Will Auceptin under layers of protection, and other scenes. Finally, he said, "Before this nightmare, Aaron had gone to Will Auceptin's place to find the child, partially because he was worried about his health but also because he was puzzled over his bad luck. Unfortunately, the Auceptin family had moved away. However, Aaron recalled that the boy had given him a paper crane that the boy had folded himself and had wished him luck.

"Perhaps agitated by these two events, he had such a nightmare."

The man in the gray coat looked pleasantly surprised.

"Paper crane?"

"Yes." Klein nodded slightly. "The child gave it to Aaron before he was discharged, and Aaron threw it into his office drawer. He forgot about it until last night."

"I understand. Thank you for your explanation." The captain of the Nighthawks team stood up and bowed with his hand against his chest in a very polite manner.

Suddenly, there was a ripple in the dreamland, and he disappeared from the room.

Looking at the position where he had sat, Klein deduced what would happen next.

The Nighthawks might go to Dr. Aaron's tonight and enter his dream for investigations and take the paper crane away. However, a question

arose. The paper crane was folded by Klein, and the real thing was above the gray fog.

Forget it. Regardless of which paper crane they use, they'll never be able to divine the answer. It doesn't matter if I switch it back or not... Klein said to himself.

He gathered his thoughts and continued to sit there. He wasn't in a hurry to leave the dreamland, and he stared blankly for a long time.

After a while, the corners of his mouth curled up as he softly sighed.

How nostalgic...

Chapter 390: Anticipation!

On Sunday morning, shortly after Klein finished his breakfast, he heard the doorbell ring as he had expected.

But to his surprise, it wasn't just Reporter Mike Joseph. Dr. Aaron was with him as well.

"Sherlock, I had that nightmare again last night. I don't think it's normal." Aaron didn't keep matters a secret even with Mike around, revealing it the moment he entered the living room.

Without waiting for Klein's reply, he took out his wallet and took out a paper crane.

"Do you think this is the problem?

"Ever since I found it and started to carry it with me, I've been having nightmares."

Klein nonchalantly glanced at it when his expression froze suddenly. If he hadn't been a Clown in the past and had great control over his facial muscles, then he might've revealed an undisguised smile in front of the reporter and doctor. Yes, a smile.

This... this paper crane is even uglier than the one I made... This was the first thought that came to Klein's mind.

At that moment, he had the urge to cover his face and sigh.

Could having poor handicraft skills be a tradition of the Nighthawks?

There was no doubt that the paper crane in front of him was the result of another switch. After receiving accurate information from Klein, the Nighthawks had seemingly sneaked into Dr. Aaron's bedroom without any delay and switched their folded paper crane for the one in his wallet.

But what they didn't expect was that the one in the wallet was also a fake. It was folded by Klein above the gray fog and appeared rather crude.

I feel an inexplicable sense of joy... Klein glanced at Dr. Aaron, who didn't notice it, cleared his throat, and said, "Perhaps. I suggest that

you go to the cathedral again and talk to the bishop you previously talked to. We need to believe that the gods that we believe in are always watching over us."

As he spoke, he drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

After the Nightmare had left last night, Klein had specifically gone above the gray fog to divine if it was dangerous having switched the paper crane. The result was that it was very safe. Thus, he was now able to make this suggestion with great interest, in an attempt to tease his former colleagues.

I wonder how they would feel seeing the paper crane that they didn't fold very well return to them... Klein placated Dr. Aaron in all seriousness and turned to the reporter and said with a smile, "Mike, to tell the truth, what I really want to advise Aaron to do is to go see a psychiatrist, but faith can certainly soothe his soul."

"You're not being frank at all." Mike laughed. "All right, let's go."
The next day, Klein accompanied the Daily Observer reporter into East Borough to interview the rescued girls.

With a full pound as payment for the interview, no one refused it, not even some of the abused girls.

In this interview, Capim's sin was the main focus. The current situation of the girls was another main focus. The former made people angry, while the latter left people feeling heavy.

Daisy was actually lucky enough to be able to return to work when she got home and use her labor to barter for food. Less than a third of those who were rescued were like her, and most of them were the kinds with some savings at home, and they were in a position that allowed the traumatized women to heal and have time before they sought out suitable jobs.

As for the other two-thirds of those rescued, they had to continue working hard in order to survive. And in the face of the mass unemployment of textile workers, they were often only able to find temporary jobs with low wages. Those with parents and siblings who hadn't lost their jobs were still okay; at least, they were able to help

each other, barely filling their stomachs. The families in less optimistic situations had already begun to walk the path of street girls, as though they had never been rescued. Their act of betraying their bodies once was perhaps only for some food.

This caused Mike to turn silent like before, and it was only when it was dark and once he left East Borough before his spirit returned. He thanked Klein.

“Sherlock, it’s all thanks to you. Otherwise, I definitely would’ve been blackmailed today by those rogue gangsters.”

“Isn’t that why you hired me?” Klein smiled politely without any complacency.

With Old Kohler informing them beforehand, Old Kohler and Liv’s family hadn’t revealed that he had helped search for Daisy for free. Especially when Daisy, who was pretty smart, was asked if she knew any relatively special people, she answered directly, “Mr. Reporter and Mr. Detective.”

Mike nodded sluggishly and walked on in silence for a long time. Before he boarded the carriage, he suddenly let out a sigh.

“I would like to make a call in this report for the government to use Capim’s estate to set up a bursary fund, which will use the annual income to help the rescued girls and others who have been harmed by Capim to get them out of their predicament.

“Although Capim’s safe had already been robbed clean by the Hero Bandit, his greatest wealth is the property he bought. Ththese should have all been obtained illegally.”

Klein listened carefully, gave Mike a deep look, and said in sincere praise, “You’re the best reporter I’ve ever met.”

“There are plenty of reporters like me. There are always idealists in the world.” Mike sighed.

With that, he paid 10 pounds to Klein and took off his hat and waved it.

As he watched the reporter get into the rental carriage, Klein was about to take a public carriage in the other direction when Mike suddenly opened the window and asked with a jibing smile, “Sherlock, I’m not the only reporter you know, am I?” Klein was stunned for a moment, then he laughed.

“Guess.”

...

City of Silver.

Like a trapped beast, Derrick Berg paced around the room in anxiety.

He felt that the Chief wasn’t paying enough attention to his report. He was worried that the exploratory team members, who had been affected by the Fallen Creator to an unknown extent, would cause devastating damage to this city that had lasted for 2,582 years in the darkness after their quarantine.

In such a situation, he was eager to obtain advice from Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and company, who were rather familiar with the Fallen Creator.

This was the Tarot Gathering he anticipated the most.

Wait a little while longer, just wait a little longer. If Mr. Fool doesn’t summon me, I will pray directly to him... Derrick tried to calm himself down, but his pacing didn’t slow down one bit.

Suddenly, he saw the endless gray fog and heard the messianic voice say, “Prepare for the gathering.”

With a sigh of relief, Derrick sat down on the edge of the bed carefully and lay down, pretending to be ready to sleep due to exhaustion.

After silently counting a thousand rapid heartbeats, he waited for a while before he was engulfed by the illusory dark red light.

At that moment, Derrick’s room was abnormally quiet. Lightning streaked across the sky outside his window, keeping the darkness away from the land.

Suddenly, by the corner of his bed, a black figure squirmed and extended, taking the shape of a human!

The dark figure quickly grew tall and quietly looked down at Derrick.

He carefully observed him for nearly a minute, then withdrew without gleaning anything.

In the corner, the shadows remained the same, unchanging.

...

The endless gray fog lingered beneath his feet as usual. The long bronze table in front of him was mottled with green rust, but it didn't seem to be rotten at all. The first things that Derrick saw were Miss Justice and Miss Magician sitting opposite him. The familiar, jovial greeting sounded in his ear.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

"Good afternoon..."

Klein, shrouded in gray fog, nodded slightly. He seemed to respond leisurely to Miss Justice and the other members' greetings, but in reality, he was busy manipulating The World, making him appear like a real person.

After yesterday's interviews with Reporter Mike, it was already dinner time. Klein went to a restaurant that served Feynapotter cuisine, and he was so overwhelmed by the spiciness that he voluntarily ordered a cup of desert beer.

After eating his fill and returning home, he didn't go out again for the rest of the day. Neither did he study the Book of Secrets or prepare his own food. That eased the heavy emotions he felt whenever he went to East Borough.

Without realizing it, the afternoon had arrived, and his thoughts shifted to the Tarot Gathering.

After the greetings, Justice, Audrey, restrained her curiosity and excitement, and she was in no hurry to inquire about the truth behind the Capim incident.

Mr. Fool might not answer, but how would I know if "He" wishes to answer if I don't ask? Well, I hope "He" makes a request of equal value, and I'll do my best to fulfill it... Audrey looked around at the other members and observed the states of the other members.

As a Telepathist, she very quickly discovered something strange.

Eh, The Sun appears very anxious. Did something happen to the previous exploratory team captain? Did he encounter Amon?

In addition, Fors is in an indecisive state of wanting to ask but not daring to... She must've seen the papers and guessed from the tarot cards that our Tarot Club was involved in Capim's death. But she's curious who the Emperor card represents... She seems to be even more in awe of Mr. Fool. What happened?

Mr. Hanged Man seems to be in a very good mood. He's finished digesting his potion... He seems to be anticipating something...

Mr. World is still as gloomy and reserved as before, and it's hard to read his thoughts. He really is the nemesis of the Spectator pathway...

Derrick, didn't try to hide his anxiety, but he didn't consult the other Tarot Club members directly.

He knew perfectly well that the initial time belonged to Mr. Fool, unless there were no so-called Roselle diary entries.

There's no need to rush. The gathering has already begun... If Mr. Fool is in a good mood, he might be able to answer some questions... Derrick consoled himself.

Alger looked up and humbly said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I've found three new pages of Roselle's diary."

Diary? Roselle's diary? Fors pricked up her ears.

Klein smiled and replied, "What do you want to exchange them for?"

Glancing at the card next to Mr. Fool's hand, Alger suppressed his eagerness and said, "I want to know what that card you have next to you is."

I know that... Audrey's eyes were half-turned, and her chin was slightly raised. She happily cast her gaze diagonally across her, towards a stone pillar that supported the dome.

She quickly withdrew her gaze, ready to admire the reaction of Mr. Hanged Man after he heard the answer.

Fors vaguely realized one thing: *The so-called Roselle's diary can be exchanged with Mr. Fool for answers to certain questions, and maybe even some items!*

Roselle's diary? Is it referring to the notes that are written with Roselle's unique symbols that no one can interpret? They were actually diary entries? Mr. Hanged Man's tone sounded very firm and Mr. Fool didn't retort him...

I've encountered many, but I've never bought any of them because I wasn't interested. Ah, yes, Miss Audrey has quite a few! She's a fanatic when it comes to this! B-but that dog of hers... last week, no—maybe last week, I don't remember it too well... Basically, it tore up many books and notes, including all of the diary entries from Emperor Roselle!

The sudden surprise and disappointment that emerged had filled her heart and made her want to raise her hands, cover her ears, and scream.

That wasn't enough to express her current feelings!

I hate dogs! Fors bitterly thought.

The Hanged Man's request was somewhat beyond Klein's expectations. However, it was the easiest for him to complete. He chuckled and said, "Sure."

"Do you want everyone to hear it, or do you want to be the only one to know it?"

Alger replied without hesitation, "Only myself."

He didn't have the spirit of selfless devotion to others.

Klein laughed and blocked the senses of the other members, which made Miss Justice very upset. She was waiting to see Mr. Hanged Man's stunned and shocked expression, as though she had done something great herself. Although she couldn't proclaim it out loud, she still looked forward to the subsequent reaction after Mr. Hanged Man knew the answer.

But now, that detestable Hanged Man has deprived me of this happiness! Audrey grumbled inwardly.

Of course, she was very clear that his request was absolutely justified.

But I already know the answer... she pursed her lips and thought.

At this moment, Klein leisurely flipped over the Card of Blasphemy and held it vertically, allowing The Hanged Man to directly see the black-armored, crowned, and caped Roselle.

It was common to see the portrait of Emperor Roselle, so Alger recognized him immediately. More importantly, there was a clear sign on the card saying: "Sequence 0, Black Emperor!"

Indeed! It's the rumored deck of cards, which contains the paths of the divine, made by Emperor Roselle. It's the original prototype of tarot cards! Sequence 0, Black Emperor... Is this the Lawyer pathway to becoming divine? Mr. Fool has been collecting Roselle's diary all this time, apparently in order to find clues to this deck of cards, and in a matter of months, "He" has already acquired one... Alger was surprised and delighted, as well as excited and agitated.

All of a sudden, he inexplicably felt that the future of the Tarot Club was incomparably bright.

Previously, he had only been intimidated by the mysteriousness and potency of Mr. Fool, and he had only held the notion of using the Tarot Club to exchange information and goods. But now, he began to think of the advantages that he and the other members could reap when Mr. Fool managed to collect all of Emperor Roselle's cards.

At that time, the Tarot Club might become the most powerful secret organization! Alger couldn't help but look forward to the future.

Then Klein said slowly, "A Card of Blasphemy."

He then immediately removed the isolation barrier.

As soon as she regained her senses, Justice Audrey immediately turned her gaze towards The Hanged Man. Through the blurred image, she could vaguely "read" the remaining shock, joy, and yearning from the other party.

That's more like it... Audrey was immediately greatly satisfied.

A Card of Blasphemy... Indeed, it's related to the Blasphemy Slate... Alger bowed his head in thought for a few seconds and began to conjure the three pages of Roselle's diary.

Soon, the three yellowish-brown goatskin parchments were in Klein's hands.

He casually lowered his gaze and started reading at a moderate pace.

"15th March. I really am the protagonist. With just some archaeological clues and folklore, I've found a ghost ship left behind by the Solomon Empire in the Fog Sea's boundary at the Aurak Archipelago, the Dark King!

"It's really cool!

"There are some ancient books on it, including a treasure map pointing to some nameless island. That's the final settlement of a great noble of the Solomon Empire who was defeated and left the Northern Continent. Everything that he left behind is there!

"This treasure will definitely belong to me!

"19th March. After much deliberation and consideration, I've finally decided to set out on a long voyage. After that, I'll enter the Royal Army as an officer, so it will be hard for me to have an opportunity such as this again.

"Edwards and Grimm are willing to take the risk and follow me into that foggy sea.

"Actually, I don't just want the treasures. I also wanted to verify something—from the sun, the red moon, to the trajectory of the stars in the sky, as well as the changes in four seasons, all sorts of signs and different data to prove that the world I'm on should be a planet. In that

case, it shouldn't only be the Northern and Southern Continents. Based on the various data, the land mass occupied by the two continents totaled up isn't even a tenth of the planet's surface area. Could the rest of it be the sea and islands?

"To the west of the Northern and Southern Continent is the Fog Sea; to the east is the Sonia Sea. I suspect that there are other continents at the end of these two seas, just like how the Southern Continent is at the end of the Berserk Sea. Maybe I can find a brand-new continent, the Western Continent!

"Let's go, great seafarer Roselle Columbus Magellan Gustav, go and verify your conjecture!"

The Emperor sure was reckless when he was young. He actually dared to go on a voyage just because he received a treasure map that he had no clue about its authenticity, or if it held any danger. No, he's as rash as he was when he was young, even in his old age. The Cards of Blasphemy are evidence of this... Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

The diary entry seems to be linked to a page or two that he had seen before, separated by at most one or two other diary entries, so Klein was almost certain that Roselle had lost his way in this voyage and ended up finding a primitive island just outside of the safe sea routes. On it, there were a number of Beyonder creatures. In the process, he had also teased Grimm and Edwards, who were following him to sea, using the memes of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the Pirate King.

In addition, Grimm, who had been praised by Roselle as the smartest of them all, became increasingly stranger after discovering the primitive island, and he ended up dying in the Fog Sea.

Speaking of which, the idea that the world is a planet is now widely accepted and confirmed by astronomy... Klein turned to the second page of the diary.

"18th April. I discovered the term Western Continent in an ancient book on the Dark King!

"There really is a Western Continent!

“However, even during the Fourth Epoch, in the Solomon Empire, when the gods were still walking the lands, the Western Continent was only a rumor. Legend has it that it was the homeland of the elves, and it was related to the ancient god named Soniathrym.

“The problem with that is that the elves ended up on Sonia Island and later scattered themselves over the mountains and the numerous islands in the seas, and there is no legend that they have ever tried to return to their homeland.

“In short, the end of the Fog Sea might be the Western Continent, the homeland of the elves. Then, what’s at the end of the Sonia Sea? Is there really an Eastern Continent? Where is it hidden in the books of myths? Could it be the ethereal Forsaken Land of God?

“Proceed onward, Roselle. You’re about to reach your destination!”

The Western Continent, the Eastern Continent... Roselle guessed that the latter might be the Forsaken Land of God... Yes, Mr. Hanged Man once said that many members of the Aurora Order were searching the Sonia Sea for the True Creator’s holy residence. And he suspects that the holy residence is the Forsaken Land of God... This is in line with Emperor Roselle’s thoughts... This world has many secrets... Klein lowered his gaze towards the last few paragraphs of the page.

“20th April. All signs indicate that we’re about to reach a continent, not the land from an island!

“There’s actually a benefit to being lost? Could it be that I’ve discovered the so-called Western Continent?”

“21st April. I saw the abyss.”

Abyss? Did Roselle see the Abyss, the Abyss in the sense of mysticism? Klein’s pupils shrank as he quickly turned the page.

But the third page of his diary made him doubt his life and his many years of Chinese education.

It was filled with the following sentences: “Ah, f**k hungry please people in manor.”

This... Klein realized that this was probably a subsequent forgery of Roselle's diary entries. They had randomly pieced together a bunch of sentences based on the original "symbols."

At this moment, Klein felt like he was seeing intelligible characters and had the urge to curse those forgers.

He wanted to know if the abyss mentioned in Roselle's diary was the Abyss to which the terms "source of evil," "land of corruption," and "home of devils" referred to.

The true Abyss is the Dark Side of the Universe where even gods can be corroded. It should be independent from the real world, just like the spirit world. At the very least, this is what the Book of Secrets and the books which I came into contact with during my time with the Nighthawks say... If it's not the true Abyss, then what did the Emperor mean by "abyss?" Klein thought about it, over and over again, but was unable to come up with an explanation. He felt extremely dissatisfied, just like when a novel was dropped by the author at the most critical moment.

With a single glance, he calmed down and let the diary entries disappear from his hands.

"You can begin." Sitting at the head of the long bronze table, he chuckled.

Alger turned his head immediately towards The Sun, asking indifferently, "Have you gotten anything from the former captain of that exploratory team?"

Derrick was originally anxious to ask about the Fallen Creator, but when he heard The Hanged Man's question, he answered honestly, "He's dead."

"He's dead?" Justice, The Hanged Man, and The Magician expressed their surprise at the same time.

They really didn't expect this turn of events. After all, the former captain of the exploratory team had been locked up for decades without any problems. Who would've thought that he would die right after they discussed about him!?

At this moment, aside from Mr. Fool, only the gloomy and reserved The World maintained his original state.

Derrick nodded and said, "Yes. After I returned to the City of Silver, I wanted to glean more information from the former captain using Mr. Hanged Man's suggestions, but he suddenly appeared behind me, asking me if I was looking for him." Upon hearing this, Audrey suddenly drew a short breath.

Although The Sun obviously lacked the ability to tell a good story, his simple descriptions still gave her the feeling of reading horror novels late into the night. It was as if someone was standing behind her, also asking, "Are you looking for me?"

Fors was as frightened as she was excited, having found the feeling she had as a child listening to her mother's recount of a ghost story. Despite covering her ears in fear, it felt like someone had possessed her and pried open the gaps between her fingers, allowing the voice to be transmitted into her brain.

This passage can be written into a novel! As a best-selling writer, she had outstanding professional instincts!

Alger, being experienced and knowledgeable, subconsciously asked, "Doesn't your City of Silver's dungeon have seals targeting Rampagers? Is there no barrier between them? I remember that last time you said that there was a very powerful and mysterious item at the core."

"Yes, but I don't know how or why he came to my room. He had completely lost control of himself—his head had split open in the middle and fluid kept flowing out. There were many cracks on his body, and each crack was a mouth," Derrick said, describing the scene in passing.

"Then, how did you survive? How did you escape from his, no— its jaws?" Fors felt immersed, and it was also a question which Audrey was concerned about.

Alger's reaction was very different from theirs. He thoughtfully murmured, "It doesn't make sense to put you—a person who only shows signs of losing control—next to such a dangerous fellow.

"From the looks of it, the upper echelons of your City of Silver, the members of the six-member council, deliberately made you interact with him, hoping to gather useful information from him and observe any corresponding changes.

"So, which elder saved you?"

Derrick's mouth gaped a little, feeling as if Mr. Hanged Man had personally seen and heard everything that had happened.

Just based on the situation I described, he was able to guess the truth. How amazing! Derrick answered with admiration, "Yes, just as you said, the Chief appeared just in time and used the mystical item to deal with the Rampager."

Noticing the respect and admiration from The Sun, Alger let out a chuckle.

"It's quite an obvious case. As long as one is experienced enough, you'll easily be able to notice this."

I didn't think of it... Audrey muttered to herself, somewhat depressed.

I couldn't tell... Fors ran her hand through her hair, ashamed.

I didn't think in that direction... The World repeated Mr. Fool's sigh.

After saying that, Alger frowned slightly and slowly asked, "You said that not long after you returned, the former Captain of the exploratory team lost control?

“He didn’t lose control for decades, but he suddenly lost control after you returned?”

At the same time, Mr. Hanged Man raised his head and looked at Mr. Fool. Seeing that Mr. Fool was very calm and without any hint of abnormalities, his mood immediately eased. All the uneasiness he had just now turned into questions.

The Amon family is known as Blasphemers. Could it be that that person discovered the Tarot Club and the secret above the gray fog, but he was easily finished off by Mr. Fool?

Derrick nodded seriously and said, “I guessed two reasons. One was because I chose the Sun pathway, and you said that the Amon family was the descendant of an ancient sun god. The other reason is that he noticed that Mr. Fool was pulling me in to attend the gathering, so changes happened to him, and it was proven to be the latter.”

“How was it proven?” Alger pressed, leaving no stone unturned.

Someone sensed that Mr. Fool was pulling him in to attend the gathering? Someone can really detect it? How terrifying... As expected of a Blasphemer... Audrey was astonished and shocked.

She couldn’t help but glance at the end of the long bronze table, and she was immediately comforted by Mr. Fool’s calm and indifferent attitude.

It’s just a trivial matter. To Mr. Fool, it’s just a trivial matter... Audrey thought with joy and relief.

So it turns out that someone is able to discover the Tarot Club’s gathering... As expected, with so many pathways and so many Sequences, there would always be a Beyonder power that can detect this... But for me right now, this is a very bad thing... I’m still too weak. I have to advance my Sequence as soon as possible...

Fors was momentarily surprised and frightened.

Derrick truthfully described the events, “I saw Amon’s shadow when the Rampager was finished off by the Chief. It should be him. This is what he looks like.”

With the approval of Mr. Fool, Derrick conjured a light screen depicting Amon.

A black classic robe, a matching pointed hat, a crystal monocle, a broad forehead, a thin face, black eyes, black curly hair...

“Have any of you seen him before?” Derrick asked hopefully.

The Hanged Man, Justice, The Magician, and The World shook their heads in unison.

Without harping on the matter, Derrick continued, “Amon’s shadow was eliminated by the Chief with the help of the mystical item, leaving being a translucent worm.

“The Chief told me that it was only an avatar of Amon...

“He explained to me the reason for arranging it so I lived beside him. After confirming that I was fine, he allowed me to return home. I was a little afraid, unaware of any subsequent actions Amon might take. Therefore, the moment I reached home, I prayed to Mr. Fool...”

“Wait,” Alger interrupted The Sun with a frown, “you said that you just experienced such a strange and terrifying incident, and the Chief let you go home just like that? And the moment you returned home, you didn’t do anything but first pray to Mr.

Fool?”

“Yes,” Derrick answered blankly.

What’s wrong with that? He found Mr. Hanged Man’s attitude rather odd.

Audrey vaguely felt that what The Sun had done wasn’t right, but she couldn’t immediately figure out what was wrong. She just believed that if she were in his shoes, she definitely wouldn’t have done that. But at that very moment, Fors had already covered her face.

Too careless... I was like that in the past, and the price of that was to use up a stone on my bracelet and start bearing the curse of the full moon... The best-selling writer sighed in her heart.

Alger glanced at Mr. Fool again. Seeing that he remained indifferent, he forced himself to relax. He held his fist against his nose and said, "After having such an interaction with that strange Amon, do you think the Chief will just do a cursory inspection and be completely reassured about you?

"If that's really the case, that former captain of the exploratory team wouldn't have been imprisoned for forty-two years.

"In my experience, the Chief has definitely sent someone to secretly monitor you, and you've undoubtedly exposed your own uniqueness!

"Don't doubt this. If the Chief isn't that careful, then there's no way your City of Silver can last till this day under such abject environments."

This... Derrick's eyes widened, being even more convinced that Mr. Hanged Man was truly knowledgeable and that what he said made a lot of sense!

Th-the Chief discovered something abnormal about me? So, that's why he had such an attitude when he heard my report? What should I do? What should I do... Derrick immediately became nervous and frightened.

Noticing his concern, Alger scoffed.

"However, you don't have to worry about it for now. I just thought about it, even if your City of Silver's Chief found out about your abnormality, he would only suspect that you were possessed by Amon, that you've been contaminated by him, and wouldn't think of the Tarot Club. You still have time, so you can slowly think of a way to resolve this problem."

Derrick calmed down a little and honestly said, "Back then, I really was possessed by Amon." "What?" Alger blurted out.

He nearly left his seat, taking on a combat stance to fend off any accidents.

Audrey and Fors immediately tensed up. Only the gloomy World showed mere surprise.

Startled by the reaction of Mr. Hanged Man, Derrick quickly added, "Mr. Fool discovered it while I was praying."

As he spoke, he conjured the scene which Mr. Fool had sent to him back then. Dressed in a pointed hat and a crystal monocle, Amon's illusory figure was coiled around his Spirit Body like the ghost of a python.

Seeing Justice and Magician trembling from the bottom of their hearts, The Hanged Man immediately pressed on, "What happened next?"

"Later, Mr. Fool taught me a ritual. Through the ritual, 'He' sent his angel to purify Amon's avatar," Derrick replied without embellishing or simplifying anything.

Angel? The Hanged Man looked in shock at the end of the bronze table.

He hurriedly lowered his head when he realized that his actions were impulsive and impolite.

Angel? Audrey was momentarily left dazed.

After a brief moment of blankness, Audrey quickly understood what The Sun was saying—he was saying that Mr. Fool had sent "His" angel to purify Amon's avatar!

Angel!

Mr. Fool sent an angel!

Mr. Fool really has an angel as an attendant!

Every angel has at least the power of a Sequence 2...

Although that's expected and I've already expected it, it's still amazing because it has finally been verified!

And only deities can control angels!

Audrey's eyes shone with excitement. She couldn't help but wonder what Mr. Fool's angel looked like.

I wonder if I'll be lucky enough to see that... She looked towards the end of the long bronze table with admiration and zeal.

At the same time, her spiritual perception told her that Mr. World, who was always gloomy, had also sat up straight in shock, which pleased her inexplicably.

Fors recalled what had happened to her previously. She had only asked Mr. Fool to interfere with any divinations, and she ended up seeing a twelve-winged archangel descend, enveloping her Spirit Body with its wings.

It really was an angel... Black wings, an archangel with twelve pairs of wings... And this really is just a routine procedure for Mr. Fool. "He" would send an angel to help members of the gathering get out of trouble... Fors suddenly didn't dare to look up at the gentleman who was sitting leisurely at the end of the long bronze table.

Although she was still only Sequence 9, and she hadn't received a complete education in the field of mysticism, she had been involved with different Beyonder circles for three years. She would've learned of certain things even if she didn't deliberately find out about them.

In the midst of all of this, there was a very important clause: “Do not look directly at God.”

In the past, this sentence didn’t leave much of an impression on Fors, but now she suddenly felt that it was the truth, the truth derived from countless bloody lessons.

Angel? Mr. Fool really does have an angel by his side! The Hanged Man felt a wave of fear and baffling excitement hit him, causing his body to tremble slightly.

Previously, when “He” told us his honorific name and responded to prayers and rituals, this had indirectly expressed the notion that Mr. Fool was equivalent to a god. However, direct evidence was still lacking. But now, an angel has appeared! The existence of that alone is enough to explain many things! Amongst them, the most important thing is that Angels represent the most direct form of deterrence! Mr. Fool is not without influence in the real world...

Even if “He” doesn’t go through his Blessed, “He” can still project his majesty onto a certain region... Alger immediately thought of many things. He broke into a cold sweat for his shallow actions in the past while feeling filled with hope for the future.

Immediately following that, he started to think about the details of what The Sun had said.

Mr. Fool didn’t let the angel descend directly. Instead, he taught The Sun a ritual. Through that ritual, “He” sent the angel to purify Amon’s avatar. That’s quite a roundabout way of doing things...

Does this mean that in order to influence the real world, Mr. Fool must break through many obstacles? This is consistent with my earlier judgment that “He” is in a sealed and confined state... Or perhaps there’s something special about the Forsaken Land of God?

The reason why Mr. Fool didn’t act like this before was because “He” has escaped a little? “He” is gradually freeing “Himself”...

Sitting at Mr. Fool’s seat, Klein slowly looked around. He was obviously aware of Miss Justice’s reverence and zeal, as well as the fear and excitement of The Hanged Man.

Weren't you always treating me like a god in the past? Why are you acting like this after hearing about the angel? It seems like indirect evidence ultimately cannot be compared to the shock and awe delivered by direct evidence... If a new member were to question me in the future, I would make preparations in advance for The World to step forward and say something. Then, I would casually point my finger and kill him as an example to others... Once things calm down, I would make a new The World... Klein's thoughts gradually wandered.

Derrick didn't quite understand the reactions of Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice. From his point of view, wasn't it normal that an angel served a god or a mighty existence?

After pondering for a few seconds, he said, "After Amon's avatar was purified, I coughed out a worm that was exactly identical to the one in the dungeon. Do you know what it is?"

With the help of Klein's help, The Sun successfully conjured a projection of a translucent worm with twelve transparent rings.

Audrey and Fors looked over curiously. At the same time, they shook their heads, indicating that they had never seen or heard of this kind of worm.

Twelve rings... In the Book of Secrets, all similar symbols have something to do with time... The Amon family was descended from an ancient sun god, and in ancient times, people believed that the sun and time were related... This can barely be considered an explanation and can be verified from two angles... However, why is it that the current Eternal Blazing Sun is the Inextinguishable Light, Embodiment of Order, God of Deeds, and Guardian of Businesses, but he doesn't seem to be involved in the domain that deals with time... In order to maintain his image as The Fool, Klein was in no hurry to answer.

He smiled, his gaze warm.

Alger thought for a moment before saying, "It should be the vessel that Amon created for his avatar.

"In legends, there is a type of worm that looks similar, appearance-wise. They have twelve transparent rings and are called Worms of

Time. However, no one has ever seen them before. Many people suspect that it's actually the name of a Sequence potion."

Worm of Time... So it's very close to my guess... Although this is just a legend spread among Beyonders at the middle echelons of particular Churches and above, the information itself is of great value. Is Mr. Hanged Man saying this out loud to let others know this because he has been rewarded, having learned a lot of important information from The Sun? Klein felt wistful and amused at the same time.

"Worm of Time... The vessel that Amon created for his avatar..." Derrick whispered to himself, as though he had resolved many of his doubts.

He curiously asked, "What can it be used for? I mean, when it's dead."

"I don't know." Faced with The Sun's trust and respectful gaze, Alger suddenly felt a little ashamed.

At that moment, The Fool, who was sitting at the very end of the long bronze table, spoke calmly, "The main material of certain rituals."

This was what Klein had surmised from the contents of the Book of Secrets.

However, he wasn't worried that he would say anything wrong, because it was almost impossible to prove it.

Failing to find the ritual that requires a Worm of Time just serves to prove that you're not knowledgeable enough! Klein casually added inwardly.

Certain rituals... Audrey and the others instantly let their imaginations run wild.

"Thank you, the great Mr. Fool." Derrick got up halfway and bowed. Following that, the topic steered towards the matter that threatened the existence of the City of Silver. "The exploratory team is back. I'm referring to the team led by Shepherd Elder Lovia. They completed the exploration of the Fallen Creator's half-destroyed temple and have returned to the City of Silver. And I discovered that a few of the team members that I know have undergone a certain degree of change."

“They’ve been corrupted by the True Creator,” Alger didn’t hesitate to point that out with a tone of certainty.

The True Creator? Audrey couldn’t help but look at the end of the bronze table.

She remembered very clearly that the True Creator had once had its descent foiled by Mr. Fool’s Blessed. She had even guessed that the leader of their Tarot Club was going to be “The Nemesis of Evil Gods.”

“Really?” Derrick returned, refusing to believe it.

The Hanged Man calmly said, “Describe their changes in detail.”

“I still feel like he’s the same person, but he’s very different from before. His original optimism has now turned heavy. There’s only a polite smile left from his former bright smile...” Derrick shared everything abnormal that he had discovered, including the sudden improvement in Shepherd Elder Lovia’s state.

Alger said in deliberation, “The situation might be worse than you think. Corruption could be the best possibility.

“Now, if they truly believe, from the bottom of their hearts, in the True—Uh, Fallen Creator, that would be trouble, and they would be irredeemable.

“Regardless, their characters, thoughts, and viewpoints would all be warped, turning into hidden lunatics. You can take action from this angle, letting other members of the six-member council notice that something is amiss.”

“I’ve already reported the matter, but the Chief doesn’t seem to trust me too much,” Derrick said in a slightly aggrieved and heavy manner.

Fors couldn’t help but sigh.

“That’s because your Chief is suspecting that you’re possessed by Amon and planning something nefarious against the City of

Silver.”

“Then, what should I do? Even if I tell them of the existence of the Fallen Creator, they wouldn’t believe me, am I right?” Derrick asked anxiously.

The Hanged Man pondered for two seconds before saying, “In truth, your Chief should’ve begun paying attention to the Shepherd and the exploratory team members. For your City of Silver to survive to this day, the upper echelons will definitely have the most basic level of vigilance and not neglect any possible threats. The only problem is that the importance they place on this matter is definitely insufficient; at the very least, it’s not as important as their attention on you and Amon.” Without waiting for The Sun to speak, he added after some deliberation, “Perhaps you can use this incident to wipe away the suspicion on you... Find an opportunity to make a particular exploratory team member to show the most thorough extent of an abnormality and enter into a conflict with him. That way, the other members of the six-member council will notice that something isn’t right and raise the priority on this matter.

“At the same time, hand over the suspected Worm of Time and say that you suddenly felt your mind be adrift while the conflict was happening and that you had no idea what happened. You only vaguely heard someone shouting ‘True Creator,’ before you woke up. And by then, you had already coughed out that worm.

“When an evil god is involved, there are many means and abilities that one wouldn’t dare use without thought. Your Chief would adhere to logic and guess that Amon’s avatar and the mental corruption left behind by the True Creator had entered into conflict, eventually being destroyed and reduced to a dead worm. The surveillance on you would definitely decline significantly. If you act normally for an additional period of time, then the suspicion placed on you would be completely gone.”

Why does Mr. Hanged Man seem so well-versed in this aspect... Audrey thought with her mouth slightly open.

Derrick’s eyes lit up when he heard this, and he felt that Mr. Hanged Man was indeed trustworthy. He had come up with such a good idea!

“Then, how do I make that exploratory team member display the most thorough extent of his abnormality?” he quickly asked.

Alger fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “I don’t know.”

He then added, “It would be great if there are items related to the True Creator...”

With a whoosh, Audrey looked towards The Fool who was seated at the end of the long bronze table.

Klein knew very well why Miss Justice was looking at him. Being aware of the Lanevus incident, she was certain that he had many conflicts, both in the open and in the shadows, between himself and the True Creator, and that it was normal for him to have the corresponding items, perhaps even quite a few of them, in his possession.

Logically speaking, there's nothing wrong with her thinking. In fact, I have crossed the True Creator several times, and I do have an item that fits those descriptions... Klein sighed inwardly.

There was no question about helping Little Sun. There were many monsters in the Forsaken Land of God where the City of Silver was located, allowing the collection of several materials which were rare in the Northern and Southern Continents. In addition, they had a contiguous history that wasn't distorted by any of the deities or Churches. They gave the most objective stories and secrets prior to the Cataclysm, and the knowledge involved was extremely valuable. Whether it was from the perspective of the Tarot Club's leader, or simply considering his own interests, Klein had no intention of giving up Little Sun or the City of Silver unless it was hopeless.

However, there were certain things which weren't suitable for Mr. Fool to voice out.

Just as Audrey was looking expectantly at Mr. Fool who was shrouded in a thick gray fog, The World, who had been silent all this time, finally opened his mouth.

"I have an item that contains the mental corruption of the True Creator."

He was referring to the All-Black Eye that Marionettist Rosago had left behind.

"An item containing the mental corruption of the True Creator?" Alger thought as he organized his words. "This might be able to help The Sun. Once those exploratory team members, whose thoughts and viewpoints have been warped, sense the mental imprint of the True

Creator, there's a high possibility that they will mutate right on the spot."

The World looked at The Sun and laughed hoarsely.

"Kid, I can lend you that item, but what will you be using to pay for it?"

Having seen hope, Derrick's mind raced, suddenly remembering what had happened during previous Gatherings and quickly said, "I can help you find the characteristics of the Humanskinned Shadow, the mutated pituitary gland and blood of a Thousand-faced Hunter. I can also attempt to obtain the method to removing the mental corruption on an item left behind by a Rampager. Whichever I get first will be used as payment."

Out of all of the options, the Human-skinned Shadow was relatively easy to encounter. It was one of the scarier monsters in the depths of the darkness.

At this moment, Derrick wasn't considering whether the exchange was of equal value or not. Even though a one-time loan of an item contaminated by the True Creator was obviously not worth as much as the conditions he put forward, under the current circumstances, he could grit his teeth and accept whatever high price The World offered. Thus, he might as well proactively show his sincerity.

The World nodded slightly.

"Very good, I will ask for Mr. Fool's help to lend it to you."

As he spoke, he revealed the shape of the All-Black Eye and added, "It's the equivalent of a Sequence 5 Beyonder. If you lose it, you'll have to provide me with compensation. Also, as soon as this is over, return it to me."

This was what Klein couldn't say in his capacity as The Fool. If a god-level existence like him kept harping about "compensation" and "remember to return it to me," then the status he had built up for himself would have collapsed.

In addition, Klein took into account the hidden dangers that lay in the future.

The All-Black Eye and the other items were all things that he had used in the real world. If he were to bring in a new member who knew of this matter, they could confirm certain matters based on this point. Therefore, allowing Sherlock Moriarty to be equivalent to The World was clearly better than having Sherlock Moriarty be equivalent to The Fool.

When your strength doesn't match your status, all I can do is tremble in fear, as if I were treading on thin ice or facing the abyss... Klein sighed silently.

Seeing that Mr. Fool hadn't refused The World's request, nor did he point out any problems with the deal, Derrick was relieved and quickly agreed to all the demands.

At the same time, Audrey was genuinely happy for Little Sun.

Alger thought for a while before letting out a sigh. He then said to The Sun in a measured tone, "Don't be too optimistic. How to seize this opportunity still needs to be organized. First, you have to choose a time and, without putting yourself in danger, have only one exploratory team member be present while there are several City of Silver citizens, or when they're all in a quarantined and sealed state... You have to use a wall of spirituality to seal the vessel that stores the corrupted item ahead of time and not allow anyone to notice it. By doing that, you can control the development of the situation... In addition, you need to consider how to hide that item after it's over. You mustn't let the six-member council discover it; otherwise, you'll never be able to clear the suspicion on you..."

If such an easily deceived fellow were to die, it would be difficult for me to obtain any more information regarding the Forsaken Land of God or the secrets of the ancient era... The Hanged Man didn't find it problematic to offer help.

Under his tutelage, Derrick gradually had a complete plan and a few key points to take note of.

"Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man. Thank you, thank you to all of you," he sincerely expressed his gratitude to every member in the gathering. This made Audrey feel the satisfaction of doing a good deed.

The matter of The Sun came to an end at this point, and Fors, who had witnessed it all, suddenly had an idea.

She ruffled her slightly curled long hair and said, “I wish to know which family the Apprentice pathway belongs to. I’m willing to use one of the chapters in the Sights in the Spirit World as a barter. Although the content is considered the ravings of a dreamer, many of the things described in it are true from my experiences into the spirit world.”

The Sights in the Spirit World was one of the mysticism notebooks that Mrs. Aulisa had left her. The logic of the content was incoherent, absurd, and just reading it alone left one irritable. However, when her body entered and left the spirit world three times for a variety of reasons, Fors discovered that the records in the notebook might not necessarily just be ravings.

Sights in the Spirit World? Klein leaned back slightly as he controlled The World to answer before The Hanged Man.

“I know the answer, and I can give you some of the

corresponding information for free.”

He knew very well that The Hanged Man could also answer The Magician’s questions.

It’s bad to have competition; that’s why you need to combine it with free gifts... Klein silently lampooned.

“Alright.” Fors felt a surge of joy.

She discovered that the Tarot Club really was much more highend than the other Beyonder circles that she had participated in before. Many difficult questions could be answered here.

At this moment, The World asked in a low voice, “Do you want to hear the answer for yourself or have everyone else hear it too?”

Fors pondered for a few seconds, then caught Audrey and the others by surprise with her answer.

“Just say it out here.”

In her opinion, the answers to her own questions were of little help to others, and it didn't matter if they found out, and if Mr. World had left something out, or gave an incomplete description, and someone else happened to know the corresponding content, then she would be able to use the same Sights in the Spirit World chapter to obtain the full picture.

She believed that it was more important that way.

The World wasn't surprised and said in a low and hoarse voice, "In the Fourth Epoch, the Apprentice pathway was wielded by the Abraham family. Later, it was spread to the Tamara family which had been in marriage alliances with it for extended periods of time. In the Fifth Epoch, which is the present epoch, the Theosophy Order also has the Apprentice and Trickmaster potion formulas. They're widely believed to be related to the Abraham and Tamara families. Of course, there are also people who suspect that the Theosophy Order is actually a guise of the Demoness Sect."

Considering that Miss Magician had already met with members of the Abraham family, Klein added via The World, "It is said that the Abraham family has suffered a bloodline curse all this time. They have no choice but to take up residence separately from each other in order to avoid danger."

Bloodline curse? Fors's eyes widened as she thought of her encounters.

Mrs. Aulisa's husband belonged to the Abraham family, and that Mr. Lawrence is also a part of the Abraham family? Is that why she said that as long as one isn't a member of the family clan, they wouldn't suffer the curse. However, I used the bracelet, and it belongs to the Abraham family? Once again, regret gnawed at her soul.

This was the first time that Alger and Audrey was hearing about the bloodline curse of the Abraham family. Both of them had their own thoughts, so no one spoke up for a short period of time.

After a while, Fors took a deep breath and said, "Thank you, Mr. World. You have answered the biggest question I have.

“I will copy the first chapter of the Sights in the Spirit World after the end of this Gathering and sacrifice it to Mr. Fool. Is that okay, Mr. Fool?”

The Magician is a descendant of the Abraham family? It’s no wonder her body can enter and exit the spirit world... She likely possesses a corresponding mystical item... The Hanged Man suddenly looked at her.

Fors is a member of the Abraham family? She was born in an ancient family dating back to the Fourth Epoch? Audrey nodded as if she was thinking about something.

After receiving a positive reply from Mr. Fool, Fors relaxed and began mentioning her desire to buy the Beyonder ingredients— stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater and the blood of a Deep Sea Marlin. Unfortunately, The Sun wasn’t going out during this period of time, so there was nothing. As for The Hanged Man, he merely mentioned that he had clues to the Deep Sea Marlin’s blood.

No one had obtained the formula for the Wind-blessed potion yet. On the other hand, Audrey wasn’t in a hurry to purchase the Psychiatrist formula because she was about to join the Psychology Alchemists.

Klein originally wanted to sell either the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic or Biological Poison Bottle, but after considering the latter’s compatibility with his Spirit Body state and the current financial situation of the members, he temporarily gave up on that idea.

The transaction segment quickly ended, and the gathering reached the stage where each of them could share information they had heard about.

Audrey slowly looked around and said with a slight smile, “Last week, an interesting case happened in Backlund. The protagonist is called the Hero Bandit Black Emperor.”

Black Emperor? The Hanged Man, who was casually listening to Miss Justice, suddenly raised his head. His gaze suddenly became sharp and piercing.

He had just learned that the card in Mr. Fool's hand was one of the Cards of Blasphemy created by Emperor Roselle; the name of the card was Black Emperor!

Does this have to do with Mr. Fool? Alger quickly glanced at the end of the long bronze table, before immediately lowering his head.

If it was really done by Mr. Fool's Blessed, this definitely isn't a simple matter... Alger listened attentively to Miss Justice's subsequent descriptions.

Fors, who had long since learned of this from Xio and had some predictions about it, also gave The Fool a glance. She wanted to see the truth from the concealed entity's reaction, but The Fool remained as calm as ever in the thick gray fog.

Audrey, who wasn't able to glean anything either, paused for a moment, then continued, "The victim is a tycoon, Capim. Many rumors point to him being the biggest human trafficker in Backlund. Hero Bandit Black Emperor infiltrated his villa and robbed him of his life, rescuing many innocent girls who were locked up in his underground dungeon.

"When Capim's corpse was discovered, it was covered with a deck of tarot cards. His face was covered with the cards, Judgment and The Emperor."

She didn't mention the safe as she found it unimportant.

Covered with tarot cards? Is that the symbol for when our Tarot Club takes action? Wait a minute, a human trafficker? Alger sharply noticed a phrase.

He turned to the end of the long bronze table and humbly asked, "Mr. Fool, is Capim related to the disappearance of the colonial slaves?"

The latter was a mission had been assigned to him by the Church of Storms, and he had formerly targeted a suspect named Baelen and had asked Backlund residents—Justice, The Magician, and The World—to keep an eye out for him.

As a result, upon hearing the word "human trafficker," Alger intuitively believed that it had something to do with the disappearance of many tribes on the Southern Continent and the flight of many slaves from many islands in the Sonia Sea.

He felt that only a matter such as this, which seemed to hold some secrets, could interest Mr. Fool.

Of course, it cannot be ruled out that it was an independent act by Mr. Fool's Blessed. He couldn't possibly be waiting for everything to be arranged like a manipulated puppet... Alger thought.

Capim has something to do with the recent disappearance of the colonial slaves? On second thought, that's not a possibility that can be eliminated. There were four Beyonders in his villa, and that in itself isn't normal in the first place... Even if a tycoon like him were to hire Beyonder bodyguards, then he would only be able to get a Sequence 7 and two Sequences 8s or 9s at most. Back then, Harras, together with his mystical items, was equivalent to a

Sequence 5 expert... The Hanged Man's words jolted Klein's thoughts as he felt that the matter could vaguely be linked together.

However, he wasn't sure about his theory, and he could only disregard The Hanged Man's question. He chuckled and said, "My Blessed made some minor contributions in this matter."

As expected! Audrey's eyes shone brightly as she cheered in her heart.

As expected... It's the first time that I encountered anything to do with the Tarot Club in real life... Fors was half happy and half wistful.

Alger believed that Mr. Fool's words were an indirect confirmation of his conjecture.

Capim was definitely not a simple human trafficker. Otherwise, he wouldn't have caused a hidden existence's Blessed to take action. Therefore, there was a strong correlation between the human

trafficking and the disappearance of the slaves, both were matters that weren't simple.

Without waiting for Miss Justice to speak, Klein lightly tapped his finger on the edge of the ancient long table and leisurely added, "He obtained two Beyonder characteristics from this matter and wishes to sell them as quickly as possible. The two characteristics correspond to Sequence 8 Sheriff, and the other is Sequence 7 Interrogator.

Sheriff, Interrogator... Aren't those from the Arbiter pathway which is controlled by the Augustus family? Only members of the royal family, ancient nobles, and the military could possibly acquire them... Capim had one of them backing him? Not excluding the possibility of the Feynapotter Kingdom's Castiya family... Alger frowned, feeling that the disappearance of the slaves wasn't as simple as it seemed.

Audrey's thoughts were similar to his. She had never thought that the Beyonders at Capim's villa would be from the Arbiter pathway.

It's impossible that the faction in control of the corresponding formulas would collude with a human trafficker like Capim... Audrey pursed her lips slightly, puzzled and confused.

Sheriff? Fors, who knew that her good friend, Xio, was saving up for the potion ingredients for this Sequence, sat up hurriedly and asked in puzzlement, "Mr. Fool, what are Beyonder

characteristics?"

That's not what I expected. Shouldn't you directly ask me how much it is? That's right, I don't think I've ever told Miss Magician about the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation... Klein was taken aback for a moment, and then he began to consider his tone.

And at that moment, Audrey spoke out on behalf.

"Mr. Fool, may I answer the question? The corresponding payment shall be paid directly to you."

She and Fors are friends, and she had volunteered out of the fear that Mr. Fool wouldn't share that knowledge again.

“No problem.” Klein smiled in response.

Miss Justice is always able to worry about the things that trouble me... He sighed with emotion inwardly.

Phew. Audrey breathed a silent sigh of relief and turned to face Fors. She deliberately didn’t use the pronunciation and unique vocabulary of a noble to say, “Do you want to know the answer?

“What are you willing to pay?”

Fors nodded without hesitation.

“Of course!”

She looked at the figure shrouded in gray fog and respectfully asked, “Mr. Fool, can I use another chapter of the Sights in the Spirit World as payment?”

She specifically emphasized “another” because she knew that the chapter she would give to Mr. World would be first sacrificed to Mr. Fool, and the knowledge that could be viewed at any time didn’t seem to have any value for a transaction.

It wasn’t to say that she suspected that a mighty figure like Mr. Fool would peek. She just felt that it was more sincere to change the chapter.

Sometimes, a mighty figure only cares about your attitude... Fors had read such things in many novels.

Leaning back in his chair, Klein replied in an unconcerned tone, “Sure.”

“Thank you, Mr. Fool.” Fors said, unable to suppress her smile.

She instinctively believed that she had come into contact with certain secret high-level knowledge!

Audrey was completely relieved as she smiled faintly.

“In the Beyonder world, there is a law. Remember, it’s a law.

“In similar pathways, the total Beyonder characteristics are conserved, never reducing or increasing. It will only move from one entity to another, changing from one form to another.

“Therefore, after the death of a Beyonder, their characteristics will be separated and become equivalent to the main ingredient of a potion. Oh, apart from the remains of Rampagers. There are too many latent troubles with those, so they can only be made into items.”

After the death of a Beyonder, their characteristics will be separated and become equivalent to the main ingredient of a potion? In that instance, it was as if lightning flashed through Fors’s mind, allowing her to understand many things.

It turns out that the remains Mrs. Aulisa left me was her Beyonder characteristic... It turns out that in the eyes of others, every Beyonder is equivalent to walking ingredients... That’s really dark... Fors clenched her fists tightly, feeling that the Beyonder world was essentially filled with madness.

However, she didn’t feel disgusted by the fact that she had become a Beyonder because she had consumed the Beyonder characteristics left behind by Mrs. Aulisa. Instead, it gave her a faint sense of warmth.

After losing her mother, before she met Xio, Mrs. Aulisa was the person who treated her the best. For Fors, it was a sad but warm experience for her to inherit Mrs. Aulisa’s remains and be with her forever.

“So that’s the case. The Law of Beyonder Characteristics Indestructibility and Conservation... That means the characteristic left behind by a Sheriff Beyonder is equivalent to all the main ingredients?” Fors asked an additional question to verify her thoughts.

“Yes.” Audrey also thought of Xio.

Fors immediately stood up and bowed to the mysterious existence that was looking down at everything.

“Mr. Fool, can you get your Blessed to reserve the Sheriff’s corresponding Beyonder characteristic? I wish to buy it, but I temporarily lack the funds. Please give me another week, is that fine?”

“Sure.” Klein took on an attitude as though he didn’t care.

Fors heaved a sigh of relief and quickly asked, “How much does your Blessed wish to receive in gold pounds?”

The price of a corresponding Sequence 8 Beyonder ingredient is around 300 pounds... Klein smiled.

"600 pounds."

After naming the price, he immediately switched topics, showing that he didn't care about a Sequence 8 Beyonder characteristic.

He looked around and conjured a few goatskin parchments.

"This is the meaning of a portion of Roselle's secret symbols. It's considered free knowledge, making it easier for you to collect the diary entries in the future."

The information included numbers and dates.

The reason why Klein had taught the members of the Tarot Club this information was that he was afraid that they would later end up buying counterfeits.

With the knowledge of dates, they'll be able to eliminate most counterfeits... Klein chuckled inwardly.

Audrey and the others were pleasantly surprised, never expecting to gain such knowledge. Although they had already discovered that the secret symbols on the goatskin were the simplest ones, they all believed that this was a good start. With a first time, there would be a second time and a third time!

After a short exchange, Klein said in a gentle tone, "Let us end today's gathering here."

"By your will." Audrey, Alger, and the others stood up at the same time and bowed.

The crimson rays of light dissipated, and the ancient palace above the gray fog returned to its former tranquility. Only Klein was left sitting alone on the high-back chair belonging to The Fool.

Chapter 396: Great White Brotherhood

After returning to the real world, Fors sat at her desk and lost herself in thought about the Abraham family for a while. She had a whole new understanding of the few words mentioned in the mysticism notebooks she had.

So that's how it is... It's no wonder Mrs. Aulisa didn't wish to inform Mr. Lawrence of her and her husband's death... Now that I think about it, the Abraham family is really pitiful and sad... Fors muttered a few sentences to herself before rummaging and taking out Sights in the Spirit World from a pile of ordinary books, in preparation to copy the first and second chapters.

For this, she entered Cogitation and adjusted her breathing in order to be in her optimal condition. Otherwise, just copying the contents of Sights in the Spirit World would bring her mania and confusion.

The words clearly didn't have any spirituality, but once they were combined together to describe those ridiculous scenes, it was as if they had the ability to affect her emotions... I need to take a fiveminute break after every five minutes of copying it. I don't want to lose control because of this... Fors took out her small, intrinsic pocket watch and placed it diagonally in front of her desk.

...

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Derrick woke up as a flash of lightning which illuminated everything flashed in his eyes.

He looked around, but he didn't feel like he was being monitored.

But The Hanged Man's precise description of the prior events, through reasoning and his deep confidence, convinced him that his conjecture was correct and that there had to be one or more Beyonders with particular powers that were secretly monitoring him at that very moment.

Besides, Mr. Fool didn't deny it... Derrick got out of bed and stretched his body like he usually did.

During this process, the analysis and suggestions, that The Hanged Man had given him, rapidly surfaced in his mind.

"Up till now, no one has come looking for you or has chosen to throw you into the dungeons. That's enough to tell us that your Chief and the other elders of the six-member council are still leaning towards observing. They wish to find a way of evacuating the entire City of Silver out of the forsaken land through Amon, the first person they've encountered in more than two thousand years.

"So, if you don't do anything out of line, they definitely wouldn't rouse you so that Amon wouldn't notice anything amiss.

"As such, their surveillance wouldn't be too close, physically; at least not when you're awake.

"And because of this, they probably didn't discover that you've already coughed out that Worm of Time. Their subsequent reactions are enough to indirectly prove this.

"Similarly, they should only be able to observe what kind of ritual you held, but they won't be able to figure out who you're praying to. If it were me, I would definitely suspect that it was related to Amon.

"Due to the above reasons, you can openly hold the bestowment ritual. After all of this, you can push the blame onto Amon. Of course, you have to pretend to be sufficiently cautious and careful. You have to be prepared to undergo the examination of a Psyche Analyst and other Beyonders of other Sequences when everything is over. Regarding this matter, you can seek Mr. Fool for help..."

With The Hanged Man's suggestion, Derrick walked around the table twice, carefully closed the window, lit a candle, and set up a bestowment ritual.

...

Above the gray fog, within the towering, ancient palace.

Klein was staring idly at the stone pillars that supported the dome, feeling that the building he had willed resembled an Athens temple.

Is it because of my own subconscious? his thoughts wandered.

At that moment, the dark red star corresponding to The Sun began to emit light, and it quickly dispersed the ripples to form an illusory and mysterious door. Above the gray fog, a small amount of power was stirred up as it flowed like water.

Upon hearing the stacked pleas, Klein lowered his head and looked at the All-Black Eye placed in front of him.

Let's hope Little Sun doesn't lose this. Otherwise, Mr. World would have to be gloriously sacrificed...

It was precisely because he had the All-Black Eye that Klein, who wasn't a Marionettist, could secretly control The World as a fake person, allowing him to act as if he was made of flesh and blood.

Once the item was lost, he would have to let The World die to prevent the "magic" from getting exposed.

While sighing, Klein emanated his spirituality, stirring the power of the fog into flowing towards the illusory door, forcefully pushing it open slightly and stabilizing the transmission channel.

Soon after, he placed the All-Black Eye into an iron box and threw it into the gap of the mysterious door. He casually said, "Do not touch the item inside."

After doing all this, he didn't stay any longer, because he knew that Little Sun wouldn't be able to find an opportunity to take action that quickly, and he was unsure when Miss Magician would be able to finish copying the two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World.

Relaxing his spirituality, Klein's figure disappeared from the space above the gray fog.

...

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

As soon as Derrick saw an iron-black box on the altar, he heard Mr. Fool's familiar voice: "Do not touch the item inside."

Do not touch... Derrick made a note of this reminder and decided to carry it out to a tee.

After thanking The Fool and Mr. World and ending the bestowment ritual, he opened the box with extraordinary care and examined the contents.

It was a completely black eye without a pupil. Just looking at it threw his mind into chaos, and his thoughts became sluggish. Faint, indistinct, and seemingly crazy ravings sounded in his ears.

After a sudden shiver ran through his body, Derrick closed the lid of the iron box, picked up a silver dagger, and completely sealed the iron box with a wall of spirituality.

Then, he put the iron box into a secret pocket on the inside of his clothes, fixed the Axe of Hurricane in place and left the room, heading straight for the training field.

The exploratory team members were still under the disguised quarantine.

However, Derrick had no plans to take action today. He carefully followed Mr. Hanged Man's instructions and planned to observe the situation first and patiently wait for an opportunity. Of course, if there was a good opportunity, he would have to act decisively.

Upon entering the training field, Derrick circled around the exploratory team's area and saw that they were gathered in groups of two or three, whispering to each other, but once they noticed that someone was watching, they would immediately stop and stand there in silence. At times, they would take a few steps, like zombies that had just crawled out of the darkness.

What would they do if I removed the wall of spirituality now and allow them to sense the feelings emanated by Mr. World's item? Will they turn their heads at the same time to look at me? Derrick imagined the scene of everyone turning their heads and looking at him with cold and emotionless eyes, and he felt a baffling, indescribable fear.

He drew a breath and told himself to be patient, to wait, and not to panic.

...

City of Silver, at the top of the spire, in a room that belonged to the Chief.

Demon Hunter Colin Iliad, who was resting his mind with his eyes closed, looked towards a dark corner.

A human figure stood up from the ground with a twisted posture. It swayed slightly and said with a voice that sounded like metal abrasions, “Your Excellency, Derrick Berg has held another ritual. According to my observation, it’s likely to be a bestowment request ritual. It’s very similar to the sacrificial rituals we usually hold, but what’s different is that he received a response and was given an iron-black box.

“I couldn’t exactly see what was inside, but it gave me a very evil and dangerous feeling.”

At this point, the shadow urgently pleaded, “Your Excellency, it’s definitely directed by that mysterious person. We have to take action and not let this continue unheeded! Otherwise, Derrick Berg will summon an evil god or a similar existence sooner or later, destroying the entire City of Silver!”

Colin’s expression became unusually grave. He stood up and slowly paced up and down, saying, “Let’s wait a little longer.

“Up till now, we still haven’t figured out the purpose of that mysterious person who called himself Amon. We don’t understand why he only sent one avatar to the City of Silver after discovering it, as well as the goal of patiently staying in the underground dungeons for forty-two years.

“If his intention is solely to destroy us, he wouldn’t have done such incomprehensible actions.

“Just wait a little longer. This might be our hidden hope, the hope for us in surviving the apocalypse when it comes!”

Just as he finished his sentence, a bolt of lightning flashed past the window, illuminating the pitch-black sky and the gloomy room.

...

When it was almost evening, Klein finally received Miss Magician's prayer and obtained the first two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World through the sacrificial ritual.

When he sat in the seat that belonged to The Fool, he leisurely flipped through the copied notebook, and he read them, line by line. He was stunned to find himself turning increasingly irritable.

What's happening? Those words clearly don't contain any spirituality, and the paper is ordinary as well. It couldn't be a Sealed Artifact, so how can it affect my state of mind? Furthermore, I'm above the gray fog, a fog that can even sever the influence of a true god... Klein frowned, leaned back, and carefully recalled the information in the Book of Secrets which had similar phenomena.

Not long after, he roughly understood the reason.

When certain existences were described in detail, even if it was written in text form, it would still affect the reader's thoughts and psyche!

Amongst them, the scariest were records related to true gods.

A book explaining a particular god in detail would cause every reader to go crazy or even distort their ideologies. As for Beyonders, there was a high chance of them losing control!

Sights in the Spirit World was written by a certain ancestor of the Abraham family. He had recorded all the strange and wonderful things that happened when he traveled through the spirit world.

In the first chapter, he described the lights in the spirit world. He believed that the seven rays of pure light of different colors contained the limitless knowledge of different domains, and that no matter where the travelers were in the spirit world, they would be able to see them blanketing higher elevations.

What was even more surprising was that these seven rays of light were alive! They were like Spirit Bodies that lingered there!

In the field of mysticism, many of the secret deed rituals were actually aimed at the seven pure lights, and through their secret connections, they allowed one to gain a certain amount of knowledge. Therefore,

many mysticism experts called the seven pure lights “master” or “teacher.”

In response to this, the seven pure lights seemed very happy. They had even pulled quite a few spirit world creatures to form a secret organization that specialized in teaching people—the Great White Brotherhood!

In the second chapter, the traveler from the Abraham family recorded his encounter with the “Yellow Light,” Venithan.

Chapter 397: Apocalyptic Prophecy

Relying on the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, Klein quickly recovered a good state of mind and continued to read the second chapter of the Sights in the Spirit World.

The traveler of the Abraham family, the owner of the notebook, claimed that when he wandered into the depths of the spirit world, he met an elder dressed in lemon-yellow robes.

The elder's body was translucent and was abnormally similar to the surrounding creatures of the spirit world, but his attitude was surprisingly amiable.

The traveler from the Abraham family conversed with the elder for a while, and he was surprised to find out that the elder was actually one of the seven pure lights that blanketed the spirit world at the highest elevation—"Yellow Light" Venithan.

Venithan told the traveler of the Abraham family that his own characteristics were reason and adaptation, that he was the symbol of astromancy, and that his corresponding gem was emerald.

He made a rather anxious reference to a prophecy that came from himself.

"Casting one's gaze from the cosmos, the lands shatter. Everything in the world will cease to exist."

He believed that this would be the end of the world within two hundred years. Nothing would be spared from this.

The traveler from the Abraham family didn't have much of a reaction towards this comment. Instead, he asked how he could remove the bloodline curse of his family.

"Yellow Light" Venithan told him that in a certain sense, it was indeed a curse, but it had a completely different nature from the curses in mysticism. The solution was in the future, in the hands of an Apprentice who was assisted by a hidden existence.

He also warned the traveler of the Abraham family that the day the curse was lifted was the beginning of the Abraham family's true doom.

As for what the tribulation was, he said that he wasn't so sure himself. He believed that it involved a great existence on the level of gods.

In the second chapter of Sights in the Spirit World, the owner of the notebook mentioned something else—Venithan mentioned another matter. The rulers of the Great White Brotherhood would often enter the real world, and through different methods, transform into humans and teach the knowledge of their respective domains. Since the Fifth Epoch, many of the mentorlevel characters of different domains were their incarnations. For example, the greatest astrologer, D. Forssmann, in the last thousand years had proved that their current world was a planet. He was none other than the human incarnation of Yellow Light, Venithan.

Based on this, the owner of the notebook raised a theory. Which Pure Light's incarnation was Roselle Gustav, who could be considered a mentor in many fields?

No, he wasn't... If you really want to think like that, then he's probably a Green Light... Klein raised his hand and rubbed his temples.

Based on this, he judged that the owner of the notebook wasn't an extremely ancient Beyonder. However, judging from the fact that the person didn't address Roselle as Emperor, this tour of the spirit world had likely taken place during the period when Roselle was still a consul, or when his proclamation as an Emperor was still not widely recognized.

Of course, it didn't prevent the possibility that Beyonders of the Abraham family refused to recognize any Emperor other than the Tudor Emperor.

A traveler who can roam the spirit world. It must be quite a high Sequence. If he were a High-Sequence Beyonder, Mr. Door would've long been rescued, and the so-called bloodline curse would no longer exist. Thus, the owner of the diary would be a Sequence 5 Beyonder or a Sequence 6 with a mystical item... Although the Abraham family has declined, they aren't weak either... Why is "Yellow Light" Venithan's prophecy similar to that of the Demoness Sect and the Aurora Order?

The apocalypse is coming? From the period that I predicted, the apocalypse should only be two to three decades from now? Klein frowned as he thought.

Roselle became consul in 1173, and it was currently November 1349, 176 years away, and "Yellow Light" Venithan had predicted back then that it would be within two hundred years. Considering the fact that Klein had only made an estimate of the period interval, it was possible that he was 24 to 50 years from the apocalypse (Roselle proclaimed himself as Emperor in 1192 and was assassinated in 1198).

Although the first two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World didn't provide any practical knowledge, it had thoroughly opened up his sights, allowing him to understand the situation of the spirit world to a certain extent, as well as the existence of the seven Pure Lights and the Great White Brotherhood.

So, when advancing, the pure lights seen at extremely high elevations after transforming into a Spirit Body state and holding the corresponding ritual are the Pure Lights of the spirit world. Furthermore, they are alive with their own thoughts... How miraculous...

The first two chapters of Sights in the Spirit World aren't completely lacking practical knowledge. At the very least, I know that Yellow Light's real name is Venithan and that his corresponding gem is emerald. I got to learn a lot of detailed information, and I can use this to design secret deed rituals that point towards him... But for the time being, it wouldn't be of much use...

Klein thought for a moment, then he closed the copied notebook and returned to the real world.

He had more important things to do instead of communicating with "Yellow Light" Venithan.

Klein took out a piece of paper, raised his pen, and wrote a letter to the inventor, Leppard, asking what stage of the patent approval process the bicycle was, why it hadn't been successful, and if he needed a lawyer to help him. With the establishment of the Magician's principles, the thorough digestion of the potion wouldn't take him more than two

months, and he had to save up as quickly as possible for the corresponding costs of the Beyonder ingredients that are needed for him to advance to a Faceless.

Of these, The Sun might be able to offer one item for free because of the All-Black Eye, but the other item required Klein to figure it out for himself.

As far as he knew, the corresponding Beyonder ingredients for Sequence 6 were all over 1500 pounds and were typically in a situation where demand stripped supply.

In addition to the two main ingredients, the supplementary ingredients included the blood of a Thousand-faced Hunter and the hair from a Deep-sea Naga. These two items were extremely rare and rich in spirituality, making them expensive.

Earning money really is difficult, but spending it is easy... If only I could sell the Werewolf and Interrogator Beyonder characteristics... I can't even waste a single penny or soli... Klein sealed the envelope and adhered a stamp on it.

He knew how much he had without even needing to count.

624 pounds in notes and five one-pound gold coins, plus seven soli notes and some copper pennies.

Right. Miss Magician will pay 600 pounds for the Sheriff Beyonder characteristic meant for Miss Xio. I hope they can raise the money as soon as possible... Klein silently cheered the two ladies on.

...

"You're telling me that a Beyonder circle you recently joined has both Beyonder ingredients of the Sheriff potion, and the price is very reasonable. 600 pounds for all of it?" Xio widened her eyes as she delivered a barrage of questions.

She had just come back from East Borough to find out who had recently been keeping tabs on Capim.

“Yes, he’s a very reputable seller. The only problem is that the verification process for joining is very strict, so I won’t be able to rope you in for a short period of time.” What Fors said was entirely the truth.

“That’s great!” Xio didn’t suspect her friend, but she took two excited steps forward.

Suddenly, her expression sank.

“But, I don’t have enough money...”

The corners of Fors’s lips twitched as she asked, “How much do you have now?”

“Counting the thirty-pound deposit received from this job, a total of 310 pounds, so I’m still short of half!” Xio scratched her short blonde hair. “Let me think, let me think of where I can borrow 300 pounds... The bank won’t give a bounty hunter like me a loan, and those usuries have way too much interest... Perhaps Miss Audrey?”

She had heard from her friend that she had recently bought the Trickmaster potion recipe for 450 pounds, so she had no intention of borrowing money from Fors.

“Why are we all so poor?” Fors couldn’t help but sigh. “Miss Audrey rarely comes out these days. She seems to be busy with other things, and borrowing money from her isn’t always a timely thing to do. Uh... We can try Viscount Glaint first. If it’s too late, then I’ll help you pay for the rest. I have 430 pounds; that’s enough.”

Xio blinked her eyes and suddenly lowered her head. She said in a heavy voice, “Fors, you’re the best.

“When I advance to Sheriff, I’ll earn even more money!”

Fors smiled and shook her head.

“So, why don’t you do the cleaning today? How about that?”

...

City of Silver.

Derrick left the training field and returned home.

He had just inquired about when the exploratory team members would be released from quarantine, and he had received the answer: “When the lightning calms today.”

Sitting down at an ancient wooden table, Derrick considered the plan again, remembering Mr. Hanged Man’s reminder: *“If there’s no suitable audience to testify for you, then you might as well use the Beyonder who’s monitoring you.”*

But how do I know when I’m being monitored... Mr. Hanged Man said it with great certainty, but he wasn’t detailed enough... Many questions arose in Derrick, but he couldn’t find a way to verify them.

Although he felt embarrassed to ask Mr. Fool for guidance on this question, upon considering the fact that this matter was related to the survival of the City of Silver, he mustered his courage.

He spoke the name of The Fool in a low voice, and he briefly described the difficulties he had encountered.

After a while, he saw Mr. Fool sitting in the middle of the endless gray fog. He heard a concise reply: “Touch the item in the iron box. Do not exceed three heartbeats. Prepare yourself in advance. Pay attention to the origins of the black lines.”

That simple? Derrick thanked Mr. Fool in pleasant surprise.

He adjusted his posture and quietly put his hand into the inside pocket of his clothes.

As the wall of spirituality was lifted, Derrick’s fingers pushed open the iron box and carefully probed inside.

Suddenly, he touched an ice-cold item, and the black illusory lines appeared in front of his eyes.

At the same time, his mind buzzed, as if an illusory roar was tearing through his ears.

Derrick’s body convulsed, and tears and snot streamed down his face due to the pain.

He almost forgot what he had to do, but fortunately, in the limits of his vision, he saw the illusory black lines converge.

In that dark corner, there appeared to be a shadow!

Derrick withdrew his hand at once, as though he had touched a red-hot soldering iron.

He collapsed to the ground and began to twitch as if he had been struck by lightning. His mouth couldn't close at all, and saliva constantly dripped from it.

It took nearly a minute for Derrick to recover, close the box again, and seal it with a wall of spirituality.

He stood up and took a sip of cold water, already aware that someone was monitoring him at that very moment.

After an unknown period of time, Derrick suddenly heard a knock on the door.

"Who is it?" he asked, slightly at a loss.

A jovial voice came from outside.

"It's me, Darc. The exploratory team has been removed from quarantine.

"Weren't you interested in knowing about our experience this time?"

Darc? The image of Darc appeared in Derrick's mind.

He was of medium height, slightly plump, and strong. He was an optimistic, cheerful teenager who often beamed with a friendly smile. He was a classmate during general education and a teammate of the patrol squad.

But after this exploration of the Fallen Creator's half-destroyed temple, he had become reserved and merely smiled at everyone.

Once he recalled Darc Regence's changes, Derrick couldn't help but quiver as he felt a chill down his spine.

Why did he suddenly come looking for me? Shouldn't he be heading home after being removed from quarantine? At that moment, many questions arose in Derrick's mind.

Suddenly, he thought of a possibility.

Elder Lovia knows that I've suspected that something abnormal had happened to them, so she sent Darc to deal with me?

Derrick was first shocked and filled with horror. But immediately following that, he felt that it might not be a bad thing.

Mr. Hanged Man said, "if there isn't a suitable audience to testify for you, then you might as well use the Beyonder who's monitoring you." And now, the person monitoring me is in that corner. If Darc were to suddenly attack me, then he would definitely expose the fact that there's something wrong with him!

This way, even if I don't use Mr. World's item, I can still make things go smoothly!

Derrick turned his head to look out the window.

At that moment, the frequency of the lightning had dropped to its nadir. Only after a minute or two would a bolt of lightning streak across the sky, illuminating half the sky. The entire world and most of the City of Silver was immersed in a deep darkness most of the time.

If he were alone, Derrick wouldn't have searched for a candle to light. He liked to lie quietly in bed and think about all sorts of things.

Of course, he knew that this was actually rather dangerous. If there was no light to dispel the darkness, then monsters could suddenly appear, even within the City of Silver. However, Derrick was a Light Suppliant himself, so he came equipped with the attribute of light and wasn't afraid of something similar happening.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Darc knocked three more times, as if urging the master of the house to open the door.

He wasn't like that before; he was very polite... Derrick suddenly felt a deep sense of sorrow.

He took out a candle from a wooden box and placed it in the middle of the table. He then rubbed his fingers, creating a golden flame.

The flame lit the candle, filling the room with a faint but warm glow, and this was accompanied by a faint, pungent aroma.

The candles in the City of Silver were mainly made from the fat and oil refined from the bodies of monsters. They would have different smells due to their different origins.

After taking a deep breath, Derrick walked to the door with a strong sense of vigilance and opened it.

"What took you so long?" Darc asked with a smile.

"I was looking for candles," Derrick replied.

He didn't dare to leave his back to the other party, and he chose to walk side by side with Darc. With his classmate and teammate, he walked back to the table and took their respective seats.

"Do you want to try some of these recently dried Doom fruits?" Darc asked with a smile as he removed a small cloth bag from his waist.

Doom fruits were one of the very rare snacks in the City of Silver. It came from a plant called the Doom Blood Vine, a type of organism that didn't need light to grow. It grew by absorbing the nutrients from rotten corpses. It had a tendency to attack and was considered quite a common weak monster.

Every Doom Blood Vine had many thumb-sized black fruits, which could be eaten directly. They were crispy and sweet, but they were unable to fill one's stomach and didn't provide the necessary nutrients. They could only be used as a daily snack. The merit points received from a single patrol could be exchanged for several large bags of them.

"No, there's no need." Derrick shook his head cautiously.

"Alright then," Darc poured out a pile of black fruit from the bag, picked one up, and popped it into his mouth before noisily munching on it.

Derrick thought for a moment and took the initiative to ask, "Did you encounter any monsters in the underground area of the temple?"

Darc stopped chewing and answered with a smile, "There were quite a few of them, but they weren't that powerful. They were easily eliminated by us. That place was destroyed for a long time, so the powerful monsters probably left a long time ago."

He paused for a second, then he said with the corners of his mouth curled, "We found some strange plants at the bottom of the temple. They looked like mushrooms in the general knowledge class. They were especially bright and looked very appetizing.

"It's been confirmed that they're edible. They can bring about an enhancement in one's spirituality and strengthen one's body. If it's combined with roasted monsters, then it will emit an unimaginable fragrance."

As he said that, he took out a palm-sized mushroom-shaped object from another small cloth bag. The stem was milky-white, and the cap was bright crystalline red. It was also dotted with dark golden spots.

The mere sight of the plant made Derrick gulp a mouthful of saliva, as though he had been starving for days.

Under the illumination of the dim candlelight, the beautiful mushroom-shaped object had an alluring luster that whet his appetite in an irresistible fashion.

"Here's one for you." Darc smiled warmly.

“Okay, okay...” Derrick almost took action immediately as he picked up the mushroom-shaped plant to stuff it into his mouth, but in the end, he forced himself to open his mouth and say, “I’ll give it a try tomorrow.”

Darc didn’t say anything else. He pushed the mushroom in front of Derrick and continued to eat his Doom fruits.

With great difficulty, Derrick moved his gaze away from the “mushroom” and asked, “Did you make any discoveries on this expedition?”

“Yes!” Darc paused his snack-eating and held a black Doom fruit, replying extremely seriously, “We found a lot of murals, a continuous series of murals. Do you remember that statue in the temple?”

“Yes.” Derrick shot a glance at the “mushroom” and nodded. “A huge cross with a naked man nailed to it while hanging upside down, and its surface was deliberately smeared with a lot of blood.”

Darc fiddled with the Doom fruit in his hand and said, “The newly discovered murals tell us that the builders of the temple believed that the statue represented the Lord who created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God. They believed that the Lord didn’t abandon this land, but instead helped us shoulder the vast majority of our sins when the Cataclysm came; thus, turning from an upright position to upside down, from walking freely to being nailed to the cross and bleeding in our stead.

“God’s grace knows no bounds. We are not the abandoned, but instead, the beloved chosen ones. Without the Lord bearing our sins and shedding blood in our stead, the City of Silver would’ve been destroyed long ago. Humans would’ve long ceased to exist!”

But, in the outside world, in the Loen Kingdom where Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the others are located, there are no curses, no extreme darkness, no monsters lurking in darkness... We aren’t the chosen ones who are beloved... Derrick silently retorted inwardly.

“If that’s true, then we just need to change the symbols and the corresponding honorific name during a ritual, and we can receive the

Lord's response again..." Darc went on, describing the murals under the temple and speaking of his speculations. As this went on, Derrick found it increasingly difficult to resist the temptation of the "mushroom."

No, I mustn't eat it! If I eat it, I might end up like Darc and the others, completely corrupted by the Fallen Creator and become a fanatical believer... Even if there's someone monitoring me, they wouldn't notice anything amiss... Derrick felt a surge of horror that he had to do something to extricate himself from the situation.

Chase Darc away and return the "mushroom" to him? However, this is equivalent to giving up on this opportunity... Opportunity...

Derrick's gaze automatically fell on the yellow candle flame that was burning quietly.

"I'll get you a glass of water." He quickly went through the plan he had discussed with Mr. Hanged Man and calmly stood up.

Darc nodded as he threw the black thumb-sized Doom fruit into his mouth, munching at it noisily.

While Derrick poured the water, he deliberately slowed down his actions, lowered his head, and recited the honorific name of Mr. Fool. Finally, he said, "Your devoted servant prays for your attention.

"I pray for you to take his offerings.

"I pray for you to open the gates to your Kingdom." *Whoosh!*

A strong gust of wind blew up inside the room as the power of nature, generated under the incantation's influence, formed clear waves.

At the same time, Darc, who had just picked up a black Doom fruit, suddenly raised his head and looked at Derrick, who was facing him from the side.

"What happened?"

Without answering him, Derrick held one hand over the Axe of Hurricane and stuffed the other into his secret pocket, removing the wall of spirituality on the exterior of the iron box.

Derrick cast an exceptionally guarded gaze at Darc, only to see the expression of his classmate and teammate darken as bright red traces appeared in his blue eyes!

In his hand, the Doom fruit strangely shed its outer darkness and transformed into a seemingly pale, fleshy color.

It wasn't a Doom fruit, but a finger, a bloody finger, a human finger!

The pile of Doom fruits on the table were comprised of human fingers!

The brightly colored "mushroom" had also changed its appearance. It was no longer as beautiful, and it no longer flowed with an appetizing luster. It was a bloodstained scalp with short black hair!

Staring at Derrick, Darc opened his mouth, his voice cold and adrift.

"What were you doing?"

...

Backlund, 15 Minsk Street.

As soon as Klein, who had crawled into the warm world under his quilt, heard what sounded like a prayer from Little Sun, he struggled to get out of bed and conjured a wall of spirituality. He then took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

Seated in the seat that belonged to The Fool, he didn't hurry to examine Little Sun's request. Instead, he made the Black Emperor card, paper figurines, and other items appear in front of him on the long bronze table in a neatly arranged order.

According to The Hanged Man's plan, the scene of The Sun stimulating the mutation of the exploratory team's member would happen during a sacrificial ritual. That way, when the matter was concluded, it would be quite simple to make the object, that was borrowed from The World, disappear from the scene, wiping away all the evidence. After that, all the blame could be pushed onto Amon!

As for Mr. Fool, Klein had agreed to Little Sun's request to simplify the ritual in an uncaring manner. All that was needed to be done were the key steps.

At this point, he was waiting for the prelude to the ritual to be completed so that he could respond.

Chapter 399: The Corrupted

In the Berg household in the City of Silver.

Looking at the bloodstained scalp, Derrick suddenly recalled what it previously looked like. It was a beautiful and alluring "mushroom," one that he almost couldn't control himself from swallowing.

The Doom fruits, that Darc had shared with him and produced crisp, crunchy sounds when they were bitten into, were actually bloody pieces of human fingers with slightly pale skin!

At that moment, Derrick had a violent spasm in his stomach before a gush of acid surged to his throat.

Resisting the urge to vomit, he quickly croaked a line of lyrics, "God, please have your kingdom descend upon this land. Your enemies will disperse, and your followers will relish in joy!"

There was a touch of warmth and holiness in the song, and Derrick felt all the discomfort in his body weaken. His spirituality also became full and lively.

His courage, his strength, and his agility were all greatly enhanced by this song.

That was the Beyonder powers of a Sequence 9 Bard.

Darc stared at his former classmate and teammate singing with an increasingly dark expression. The way he spoke became more and more inhuman.

"What is that thing on your body... "What is
that thing on your body?

"What is that thing on your body!"

All of a sudden, Darc's clothes were stretched out in bugling strips, as though a nest of slithering venomous snakes was underneath them.

Whoosh! Bloody strips of flesh pierced through the black skintight clothing, and its surface had rough skin covered with hair.

Strands of meat began to flail outwards, causing Darc to look like a bloody, furry hedgehog!

With a swoosh, the meat strands surged towards Derrick, who was still standing at his original location.

Derrick was a patrol squad member who had seen quite a number of monsters, so he wasn't too flustered by this situation.

He twisted his waist, raised his arm, and swung the Axe of Hurricane that he was already holding in his hand.

Oof!

The Axe of Hurricane hacked down at a few bloody strands of flesh, directly splitting them in half and causing them to fall to the ground.

However, because it was "nighttime" in the City of Silver, this strike didn't bring about any lightning. Even more bloody strips of flesh began to surge forward, wrapping themselves around the Axe of Hurricane over and over again as they relentlessly clung to it.

Seeing that his weapon couldn't be pulled back, a pure light suddenly lit up in Derrick's eyes. It was as if two small suns had descended into the room, and his other hand was holding something close to his mouth and nose as if he was praying.

Without a sound, a fiery pillar of pure light descended from the sky, striking the bloody flesh that was wound up into a ball.

Darc let out an uncontrollable scream, and many bloody strips of flesh fell to the ground, charred black.

They squirmed, struggling as if they were alive.

The spirituality contained within these bloody strips of meat was no longer under the control of its original owner, and gradually, they merged with the natural power derived from the sacrificial ritual's incantation, forming an increasingly bright pink "wave."

This "wave" surged into the dim yellow candle flame, causing the light to suddenly burgeon, forming an illusory and mysterious door.

Derrick had long drawn The Fool's symbol of concealment on the candle!

This was all prepared in advance.

All of this constituted a simple but complete sacrifice ceremony!

Kacha!

As the seat shattered, Darc lunged at Derrick while flailing the bloody strips of meat. There was no fear or tension in his eyes, only the purest, most fervent desire.

At this moment, Klein, who was above the fog, responded.

With a creaking sound, the illusory door that had many strange patterns on it opened a tiny crack.

Behind the crack was a deep darkness in which countless transparent and indescribable shadows resided.

High above these shadows were seven pure lights of different colors that contained endless knowledge.

Above the brilliance was an endless grayish-white fog, and above it was an ancient palace that overlooked the gray fog.

Suddenly, a shadow leaped out from a dark corner, covering Darc who was closest to him.

Darc's flailing strips of bloody meat were all wrapped up by pitch-black, viscous liquid as he seemed to turn into a cat who had entered an opaque bag.

The shadow didn't stop, and it quickly extended across the ground, rushing towards Derrick, who had already dodged to another location, and shouted sternly, "Stop! What are you trying to do!"

As an observer, his original plan was to watch from the sidelines and record the corresponding anomalies. He would only take action to stop the two strange parties when the situation became unmanageable.

But when he saw the illusory door covered with strange symbols open up with a crack, he felt intimidated by the deep, mysterious, distant, and majestic scene inside. He instinctively believed that this was

related to a terrifying evil god, so he could only take hasty actions, giving orders in an attempt to forcefully interrupt Derrick's attempts at performing a sacrifice to that being.

However, Derrick had already chosen his location to be as far from the shadow as possible; therefore, to stop the boy who was possessed by the mysterious Amon, the "shadow" observer had to bypass or take down Darc Regence first.

However, his choice was the latter. Because of the obvious abnormality with Darc. Leaving his back to this being was an absolutely stupid move.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Derrick took out the iron box from his concealed pocket and threw it towards the illusory door conjured by the candle flame, towards the crack that presented a magical scene.

As the iron box disappeared, the door, that was covered in strange symbols and characteristics, closed with a "clang," before quickly vanishing.

At this moment, Derrick remembered Mr. Hanged Man's words, and he deliberately warped his facial muscles and savagely moved towards the "shadow."

Before the "shadow" blanketed him, he suddenly coughed violently and covered his mouth with his hand before falling to the ground.

The pitch-black shadow emanated and completely covered him.

The room returned to silence, but there were now two huge black "chrysalises" on the ground.

After a while, the pitch-black, viscous liquid withdrew and reformed into a shadow.

With the "chrysalis," the silhouettes of Derrick and Darc appeared once more.

The former lay there unconscious, but a tiny, strange worm with twelve transparent rings dropped from his hand. The latter had already turned into a lump of flesh, squirming and roaring as it prepared to attack.

Faced with this situation, the observer had no choice but to spare some of his strength and once again wrapped him up, using his shadow-like black "liquid" to envelop Darc Regence, who had transformed into a monster.

Glancing at the scattered pale fingers and the bloody scalp with short black hair, the observer couldn't help but take a deep breath. Using his Beyonder powers to control the shadows outside, he created tidal waves to inform the Chief inside the spire.

Only after doing this did he carefully examine Derrick's situation and saw the strange, translucent worm.

"This... the avatar that Amon hid in Derrick's body is dead?" the observer muttered in surprise.

As he recalled Darc's strangeness, the terrifying mutation, and the "mushroom" and "Doom fruits," he began to have a rough idea of what had happened.

Perhaps Amon was archenemies with the mastermind behind Darc's corruption. In order to foil the other party's ploy, Amon was willing to sacrifice his avatar. Derrick's visit to the training field to observe the exploratory team and his report of them to the Chief were both Amon's attempts to rid his enemy without exposing himself.

The mastermind behind Darc's corruption had noticed Derrick's strangeness, so he sent Darc to take control of him. The bloody scalp and fingers were props to achieve his goal.

As he thought of this, the monitor suddenly agreed with the Chief's concern—the apocalypse or an even greater disaster was about to befall the City of Silver. That was why the City of Silver would repeatedly encounter so many strange events and mysterious existences that lurked deep in the darkness.

...

Inside the Chief's room at the spire.

The "shadow" recounted everything that had happened.

The grizzled, facially-scarred Colin Iliad nodded gently after hearing the recount.

“Derrick or should I say, Amon, had really prepared ahead of time.

“The candle with the symbol engraved on it, the evil object that can expose Darc’s problem, and Derrick’s excuse of pouring water to whisper a prayer, as well as finally sending away the item in a sacrificial ritual—all of this indicates that the entire situation developed according to his plan.

“Two questions. One, who does the symbol representing concealment on the candle refer to? Amon himself or the god behind him? Two, why is Amon willing to expose the exploratory team’s abnormality at the cost of his avatar? Is it because he’s archenemies with the mastermind? Then, why did he stay in the City of Silver for forty-two years?

“Could it be that he foretold this matter ahead of time, which is why he specifically met with the exploratory team from fortytwo years ago and planted his avatar in them so as to foil the plans of that mastermind? He waited forty-two years for that single moment?”

Upon hearing the Chief’s questions, the “shadow” observer suddenly said in enlightenment, “Maybe that’s how it is!

“Your Excellency, think about it. Why would Amon patiently wait for forty-two years before making Uddel lose control when Derrick was imprisoned beside him? It’s because the foretold time was approaching, and he was in desperate need to switch to a free person that he can latch onto so as to foil the plans of that mastermind!”

“Indeed... We were only thinking about what was different with Derrick, and we didn’t pay attention to the timing,” the City of Silver’s Chief Colin answered in thought.

The “shadow” observer immediately said, “Your Excellency, please immediately lock down all members of the exploratory team. They’re definitely problematic! Also... Elder Lovia, she has a nontrivial possibility of also being corrupted!”

Colin frowned and said, “Before you reported this matter to me, and even before Darc went out, Lovia came to me and told me that she

suspects that the members of the exploratory team had been contaminated by something. She recommended that we secretly monitor them and if necessary, have them guard Elder Hawick's inverted mausoleum."

Hawick was the former Chief of the City of Silver, and he had built himself a mausoleum. After that, he lived in that mausoleum, and his appearances began to slowly decrease. Finally, the doors were closed, impossible to open again.

"Elder Lovia had long mentioned of an abnormality?" the "shadow" observer asked in surprise.

After receiving a positive answer, he muttered to himself, halfdoubtful and half-relaxed, "It's good that Elder Lovia doesn't have any problems..."

"...I've already sent people to lock down the members of the exploratory team, but we can't ignore any other possibilities." Chief Colin let out a sigh. "Let Aiflor come to me. I'll interrogate Derrick Berg together with her."

Chapter 400: The Growth of the "Rookie"

In a dark and sturdy room, Derrick Berg, who had feigned unconsciousness, suddenly rolled to his feet.

His Axe of Hurricane had already been taken away by someone and sent for inspection. Every pocket on him had also been emptied out, leaving nothing behind.

Derrick took a breath and looked around steadily.

Suddenly, his eyes lit up with two sun-like beams, causing everything in the room to be reflected clearly in his eyes.

The furniture here consisted of only a table and two chairs. Apart from these, there was also a stone-paved floor with strange patterns on it.

A half used candle was placed on the table. This was standard issue for rooms in the City of Silver because monsters could suddenly appear if the darkness prevailed for too long.

Without any hesitation, Derrick sat down and reached for the candle.

Then, he broke the candle and divided it into three sections—one was three-quarters the length of the original piece, and the other two were halved from the remaining quarter.

After Derrick's modification, the three candlesticks' cores were completely exposed.

Pa!

He rubbed his fingers together, creating a golden flame that lit up the three candles.

The two at the top represented Mr. Fool, and the remaining one symbolized Derrick himself.

After finishing his preparations, Derrick didn't continue to burn the herbal powder according to the normal processes. Instead, he poured in the essential oil and leaned back, softly chanting the honorific name of The Fool and quickly entered Cogitation.

He read it over and over again, monotonously, as if he were hypnotizing himself.

With the help of Cogitation, Derrick entered a strange state where his mind was in a deep sleep and the spirituality was dispersing. He felt adrift, but also seemed to maintain a strange lucidity. His psyche kept dispersing upwards as it rose in height.

This was “artificial sleepwalking.”

Derrick, with the permission of Mr. Fool, could simplify some of the unnecessary steps.

...

Above the gray fog, within the towering, ancient palace.

Klein, who was fiddling with the All-Black Eye, suddenly saw the crimson star that symbolized Little Sun burgeon with light, condensing into a human shadow, and the power of the mysterious space was stirred a little.

Upon seeing this, he couldn’t help but feel relieved. This meant that Little Sun had already completed the relatively dangerous part of the operation, and he only needed to “round up” the situation.

Klein didn’t delay, and he immediately put down the All-Black Eye and picked up the Black Emperor card.

He instantly rose in level and authority, forcing the stirred power in the gray fog to submit to him.

Then, he picked up a paper figurine, flicked his wrist, and threw it towards the crimson star corresponding to The Sun.

The paper figurine and the flowing power intertwined and quickly expanded into a gigantic angel with twelve pairs of pitch-black wings.

The angel pierced through the crimson light and overlapped with the illusory figure of Little Sun.

It silently combusted, turning into ashes in less than a second.

At this point, Klein could no longer affect the situation of the City of Silver. As for whether his “angel substitute” could help Little Sun pass the subsequent inquiries and investigations, he lacked absolute confidence. He could only sigh inwardly.

With what has to be done completed and with all the hard work put in, all you can do is wait for fate's arrangement. Hopefully, it will be a good result...

...

In a daze, Derrick saw an angel descend before him with an aura that covered the heavens, wrapping him with twelve pairs of black wings.

He suddenly came to his senses as three candles burned quietly in front of his eyes.

After sincerely thanking Mr. Fool, Derrick finished the ritual and extinguished the two candles which were part of the original quarter.

Then, he pulled them out and created a bright, golden flame in his palm.

Drip, drip, drip. The two candles quickly melted, dripping its wax onto the remaining candle or the area surrounding it.

When the candle burnt away completely, there was only one candle left on the table. It was shorter than before, but it wasn't very obvious. It seemed like it had only been burning for a short time.

After removing the remaining traces, Derrick extinguished the last yellow-flamed candle.

He sat up in silence, staring ahead. For a long time, he didn't do anything.

He was worried that the six-member council wouldn't react fast enough, allowing the exploratory team members to corrupt more residents of the City of Silver with "mushrooms" and "Doom

fruits."

He was afraid that the Chief and the others would find additional clues elsewhere, thwarting all his preparations.

He hated those "outsiders," who lurked in the depths of the darkness, constantly carrying strong malice, including Amon and the Fallen Creator.

He felt guilty that he had avoided the expedition without warning Darc and the rest, causing them to turn into corrupted monsters.

He had painfully eliminated a classmate who could be considered a friend with his own hands.

Although Derrick didn't see Darc's ultimate end, he believed that a man who had transformed into that state was already no different from dead.

Derrick didn't know how long he waited while experiencing those mixed feelings. Midway, he even rekindled the candle.

Finally, he heard the sound of the seal being removed and the door opening.

Turning his head to look, he saw, with the aid of the dim yellow candlelight, a woman in a black skirt walk in. She had her hair tied up in a ponytail and it hung down to her vest.

"Ma'am Aiflor," Derrick subconsciously called out.

Aiflor was a pretty woman, but she had wrinkles at the corners of her eyes. She smiled and nodded in response, then she walked over with light footsteps and sat down across him.

"Do you have anything you wish to say?" she asked gently.

Derrick instinctively lifted his head and looked over, only to suddenly discover that her pupils had somehow turned into golden vertical slits.

His mind went adrift as he seemed to enter a sleepwalking state.

Aiflor adjusted the candle flame, letting the dim yellow light completely shine on the boy's face.

Her pale golden pupils became increasingly indifferent, just like an emotionless audience.

Suddenly, rings after rings of faint light appeared in those pale golden vertical pupils. It seemed to form a vortex and constructed a maze.

In his stupor, Derrick felt himself drifting away into the endless darkness and countless bright colors.

At that moment, he suddenly became clear-headed. He felt as if something had ingeniously caught him in that state of reverie.

He saw the flickering yellow candlelight and Aiflor sitting across him with her pale gold vertical pupils.

In a corner's shadow, a grizzled Chief, Elder Colin Iliad, walked out.

After nodding to the Chief, Aiflor asked Derrick, "What have you been doing all this time?"

Derrick remembered his training and maintained the same state of mind as before.

"I don't know. I've always been in a daze as if I was in a dream. Only occasionally will I have clearness of mind..."

At the same time as his reply, two complex dark green symbols appeared in Demon Hunter Colin's eyes.

Aiflor continued, "Do you know that you had a conflict with Darc Regence?"

"I only remember that we were fighting... I felt like I had seen a man hanging upside down on a cross and a man in a pointed hat and a crystal monocle. Yes, I saw him back at the dungeon... He had opened his mouth and spoke with a smile...." Derrick told a long story.

Aiflor looked at the Chief and pressed, "What did he say?"

"I can't remember. I can only remember one thing... He said with a smile, 'Fallen Creator, True Creator... Shepherd...'" Derrick almost failed to control his excitement.

He had taken such a risk just to tell the Chief the name of the Fallen Creator and that a Shepherd was suspicious!

"The Fallen Creator... The True Creator... It matches with the content on the murals at the bottom of the temple." Colin nodded slightly and whispered with a frown, "Shepherd..." "And then?" Aiflor's voice remained abnormally gentle.

Derrick answered in his stupor, "After that, they clashed, and there was a lot of light, very bright lights. Then, I woke up and kept coughing..."

The dark green symbols in Colin's eyes didn't fade this entire time as he motioned for Evelyn to ask about the details.

Derrick answered selectively, and he had pushed the blame onto Amon according to his script. He claimed amnesia on anything that went beyond that.

Finally, Aiflor asked, "Where did you get the axe? Where did you get the Sun pathway's potion formula?"

"I bought the axe from an underground market. That person was masked, and I could only tell that he was male... The Sun pathway potion formula was left to me by my parents. They had discovered it during an expedition..." Derrick answered confidently.

These were points of suspicion that had always been there, so The Hanged Man had assumed they were bound to ask them while he was questioned. Therefore, he had made Derrick to repeatedly rehearse the answers.

Although the City of Silver's underground market was semiopen, there were still people who tried to conceal their identities for a variety of reasons. This provided the best explanation for Derrick.

After Aiflor finished seriously listening to him, she turned her head sideways to Demon Hunter Colin and said, "He's not lying. There's no way he can lie. I'm using the powers of Glory Crown.

Colin nodded his head and said, "In this state, he doesn't show any traces of evil, degeneration, or corruption."

Discovering these traits was a special ability of a Demon Hunter.

As a High-Sequence job, Demon Hunters were the best at concealing their movements and intentions, making it impossible for them to be detected by targets who could foretell danger.

Therefore, every Demon Hunter was a Devil's nemesis.

After some thought, Colin got up and left the room. He said to the shadow in the corner outside, "I'll release Derrick later. I think he's fine for the time being.

“However, secretly monitor him for a while. If Amon is able to produce two avatars, he might be able to create a third.”

“Yes, Chief,” the shadow responded respectfully.

After Derrick “woke up,” the interrogation chamber was empty, with only words informing him that he was free to leave.

He secretly heaved a sigh of relief as he began walking out. While doing so, he thought of Mr. Hanged Man’s advice: *“You can’t relax just like that and end up careless. The secret surveillance will definitely continue for some time; otherwise, your Chief is lacking!”*

Yes, I can’t even recite the honorific name of Mr. Fool anymore for the time being... Derrick muttered to himself as he walked down the spiral staircase.

As he was walking, he suddenly saw a familiar figure dressed in a purple-striped black robe. It was the beautiful Shepherd Elder Lovia.

Her pale gray eyes swept over Derrick, and a gentle smile appeared on her face.

...

Back in her room, with an indifferent expression, Lovia walked to the desk and unfolded a piece of parchment that was made from leather.

Her left hand pinched the index finger of her right hand and snapped the tip of her finger. However, not a single drop of blood dripped. It was as if her blood had been gathered onto the surface of her finger.

With this finger, she drew a complex symbol on the piece of paper. It was made up of a Pupil-less Eye which represented concealment, and the Contorted Lines which represented change.

After careful examination, she wrapped the finger with this piece of paper, stuffed it into her mouth, and bit on it noisily before swallowing it all.

With only four fingers left, flesh and blood suddenly squirmed around the wound on her right palm. It quickly grew into a new index finger, one that looked slightly pale.

She lowered her head, looked at her palm, and whispered a phrase, “The Fool?”

Backlund, in a basement that resembled a temple.

Mr. A, dressed in a hooded black robe, motionlessly quietly knelt in front of a figurine of The Hanged Giant for an extended period of time.

Suddenly, he pricked up his ears as if he was listening to something.

After a short pause, Mr. A's hands jerked up, and he snapped his right index finger with his left palm.

He stuffed the bloody finger into his mouth and munched on it like he was eating snacks, making crunching sounds.

Gulp!

Mr. A's throat wiggled, and he swallowed his gnawed fingers into his stomach.

His body suddenly trembled, as if he was being grabbed and shaken by an invisible figure.

In this state, Mr. A stretched out his right hand and used the blood from his wound to write words on the ground.

Those words were written in neither Jotun or Dragonese, which could stir the powers of nature, nor was it in Hermes which was used for sacrificial rituals. Instead, they were written in the most ordinary and commonplace language, Loen.

The scarlet color quickly gathered together and the words pieced together into a few sentences.

"Find:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck.

"Adorers and devotees in Backlund."

After the end of the "divine epiphany," Mr. A stopped trembling, and a new finger grew out of his squirming wound.

He lowered his head and carefully read the words he had just written, the corners of his mouth curled up in the shadows.

“By your divine revelation!” Mr. A humbly prostrated as though he had found the meaning of his existence once again.

...

City of Silver, at the top of the spire.

Lovia walked to the window and looked down at the candlelight in the darkness, her expression softening.

After an unknown period of time, she heard a knock at the door.

“Your Excellency?” Lovia turned around with alacrity and greeted the visitor with a smile.

The door opened backward automatically.

The person standing outside was none other than Demon Hunter Colin Iliad. He was draped with a brown coat and a leather belt with secret compartments around his waist.

“Lovia, the abnormality of the exploratory team has been verified,” Colin described plainly. “As captain, regardless of your condition, you have to stay in the dungeon for three days and undergo the Glory Crown’s cleansing. You should know that this is the rule.”

Lovia didn’t show the slightest hint of anger as she calmly smiled.

“I know, I’ve already made preparations to stay in the dungeon for a long time. When it’s over, I can accept any arrangements even if you guys still don’t trust me.”

As she spoke, she had walked to the door and went past Demon Hunter Colin while facing him.

Colin turned silently and followed her down the winding steps.

Halfway there, they heard heart-wrenching cries and shouts.

“Is it starting again?” Lovia asked with a slightly confused expression.

Collin nodded and replied in a low voice, “Yes, this is a destiny that we can’t escape from...”

At this moment, in a large hall in the middle levels of the spire.

The members of the exploratory team and the few residents of the City of Silver who had been corrupted were pressed down to the ground by seemingly corporeal holy lusters. They were unable to move, as though they were carrying a huge mountain on their backs.

A couple in their forties with dark skin held a sword with complicated patterns as they walked up to a young man in his early twenties.

The young man's body had already turned into a meat slush, but his head was still intact. Only a long, thin, blood-red tendril grew out of it.

Seeing the couple approaching, he shouted in horror, "Dad, Mom, what are you doing?

"Didn't we agree to eat grilled iron scorpions together tonight?

"Dad, Mom, I caught a lot of iron scorpions for you..."

The couple couldn't bear it any longer and turned their heads to the side, but they raised the sword in their hands high into the air...

After two stabbing sounds rang out, the young man stopped his wailing. He twitched first, then he completely lost all signs of life.

Elsewhere, a young girl, who was around ten years old, raised a sword with complicated patterns on it. Tears were streaming down her face as she stabbed her elder sister.

The girl lying on the ground suddenly laughed and gently said, "From today onwards, you'll have to live your own life. Don't be naive anymore..."

The girl immediately cried until her vision turned into a blur, and the sword in her hand stopped in midair.

However, a strong palm pressed the back of her hand, pushing it forward.

Oof!

The girl was left stunned, as though she couldn't hear or see anything.

This was the ancient curse that everyone in the City of Silver was under. They had to kill their own blood relatives to prevent them from turning into terrifying and strange evil spirits after their deaths.

Therefore, even though Darc had completely mutated into a monster and was corrupted by an unknown existence, having no value in interrogating, the "shadow" observer didn't dare to kill him on the spot. Instead, he tried his best to restrain the monster and bring it back to the spire to wait for his parents. Otherwise, the situation would only become worse.

The exploratory team members were currently receiving the same treatment that they had been subjected to, a process that remained unchanging for more than two thousand years. Although no one knew if they would mutate after dying in this state, no one dared to gamble on it.

Fortunately, the City of Silver didn't have a large population, and all of them lived in the same area. Under the arrangements of the upper echelons for each generation, there were quite a few people who were related to each other by blood. Even if they were limited by three generations, they would still be able to find quite a few.

Because of this, the Beyonder in charge of setting up a patrol team would first have to consider the matter of blood ties in order to prevent any unexpected situations from occurring.

The requirements for exploratory teams weren't that strict because their missions were always to invade deep into the darkness and stay far away from the City of Silver. Even if they died or mutated, it wouldn't affect everyone's safety.

Once a resident no longer had blood relatives within three generations, they would be placed under strict surveillance, and as soon as he became seriously ill or visibly aged, he would be exiled into the depths of darkness, away from the City of Silver.

When the previous captain of the exploratory team, Uddel, was isolated in the dungeon, there were actually three elders in the spire. However, the one who took action was Chief Colin Iliad in the end. Otherwise, they could only attempt a seal.

This was because Uddel was the elder brother of his direct kin.

Shepherd Lovia and Demon Hunter Colin silently entered the bottom level of the spire. Accompanied by a few Dawn Paladins, they arrived at the depths of the dungeon.

Soon, both of them stopped outside a cell. The Dawn Paladins dispersed themselves a distance away.

Without any abnormalities, she walked into a room with a single bed, a table, and a single candle at a moderate pace.

Before the metal door closed, she turned around and looked at Demon Hunter Colin with her pale gray eyes.

"Your Excellency, you once told me that when residents of the City of Silver leave this place and die in the depths of the darkness, they won't immediately turn into evil spirits. A few days have to pass. Therefore, the other members of the exploratory team have plenty of time to pull open a distance from them."

Colin nodded and expressed his agreement.

Lovia closed her eyes, revealing a sad smile, "In an exploration two months ago, a team member died in front of me.

"I pretended to be separated from the rest of the team. I waited there for five days, but he didn't turn into an evil spirit."

Demon Hunter Colin looked at her in silence, not saying anything until the metal door closed with a clang, and the seal took shape.

...

In the ancient palace above the fog.

After waiting for a while, Klein was finally relieved when he saw that there were no changes to the crimson star which symbolized Little Sun.

He should have succeeded... He rubbed his temples, wrapped his spirituality around his body, and descended back to the real world.

As soon as he felt the presence of his body, Klein experienced the bitter cold.

He sneezed, then he quickly removed the wall of spirituality and crawled back into bed.

Sadly, his bed was already ice-cold.

Fortunately, my body receives a certain degree of protection after entering the gray fog; otherwise, I would probably catch a cold tomorrow... Klein wrapped himself tightly with his blanket and sighed.

The current state he was in reminded him of a joke he had heard in his previous life.

Warmth is basically gained by vibration...

Before his bed warmed up again, he could only let his mind wander as he thought about all sorts of matters.

Yes, there are no pressing matters for me recently. The Magician's principles have been concluded. Even if I don't challenge the impossible and only engage in "acting" normally, I should be able to digest the potions around New Year's. My next task is to collect the Beyonder ingredients for the Faceless potion and save up the necessary funds. But that's not something I can rush... The taut strings in Klein's mind gradually softened, and he suddenly had the thought of resting for two to three days.

As the bed warmed, he fell asleep without realizing it. When he woke up, he heard the church bells ringing eight times.

Klein stretched out his arm, felt the cold, and silently withdrew it.

It seems to have turned colder again today... Since there's nothing pertinent to do, it seems I can just continue sleeping in... Relaxed, he closed his eyes again.

But after a while, he heard his stomach growling and felt the bulge in his lower abdomen.

Life is full of hard choices... Klein mumbled.

After ten minutes or so of struggling between the two feelings, he finally gave up, got up, and rushed to the bathroom next door.

After changing his clothes and washing up, he went down to the first floor and took out some ingredients to cook Feynapotter noodles.

This time, he didn't intend to use the meat sauce that he bought, but instead, he wanted to try the meat paste he had made two days ago. This was the meat paste he had carefully chosen from the ingredients based on his memories. Although there were ultimately differences in the ingredients between the two worlds, preventing him from fully replicating the authentic taste, Klein still found it pretty good after sampling it.

It wasn't long before he had a bowl of Feynapotter noodles with condiments and meat paste, He found it a really wonderful morning.

Keeping in with the tradition of this world, he browsed through the newspapers as he ate, and he checked if Eye of Wisdom had placed an advertisement first.

Based on his late night thoughts from yesterday, Klein decided to have some fun today, so he considered whether he should go to a concert, an opera, or a play.

The tickets to many of the music halls in the West Borough, Hillston Borough, and Cherwood Borough are at least six soli, and if it's a famous musician, then they would even be on the order of pounds. Music halls specially catered to commonfolk range from six to nine pence. Those that are open to the poor with money to spare in East Borough only need one pence... Klein flipped through the relevant materials to select his choice of entertainment for the day.

At that moment, he heard the doorbell ring.

Ding dong.

Who is it? Klein jerked his head up to look at the door.

He felt as if he were suffering from an illness; the fear of hearing the doorbell ring was identical to the symptoms he had experienced on Earth—being afraid of his cell phone's ringing.

Putting down the newspaper and magazine, he looked at the empty plate which had been cleaned even of its seasonings, then he stood up, and he walked to the door.

Before he got a hold of the handle, he already knew that it was Dr. Aaron outside.

Don't you need to work? Klein mumbled as he opened the door.

"Good morning, Aaron. The fog is gray today." He smiled.

Aaron was still wearing his cold expression, but there was an additional sense of anxiety and fear written on his face.

He nudged his gold-rimmed spectacles and, without bothering to greet him, bluntly said, "Sherlock, I had another dream! I dreamed of Will Auceptin again!" *Ah?* Klein almost froze.

That's not right? The real paper crane is with me, above the gray fog, while the one I folded is with the Nighthawks. You're still able to dream of Will Auceptin with a paper crane which was poorly folded by a Nighthawk? That's not scientific, no—that doesn't make mystical sense... Klein became serious and asked, "The same dream?"

"No, it's not that scary this time." Aaron became a little calmer. "I dreamed about the Grimm Cemetery. You know of it, right?" "Yes," Klein answered simply.

Back then, he had caught a group of students and a mysticism enthusiast who was a complete beginner, Kapusky, engaging in a spiritual dance outside Grimm Cemetery. He later received another copper whistle from the latter which could be used to summon a messenger.

Aaron drew a deep breath of cold air and continued, "I dreamed of the woods outside Grimm Cemetery. I dreamed of a birch tree which had

a layer of bark peeled off its trunk, Will Auceptin was sitting underneath that tree, looking at me quietly." "And then?" Klein pressed.

Aaron shook his head. "The dream ended there."

What a strange matter... Has Dr. Aaron's dream got nothing to do with the paper crane? No, if it wasn't related, then there wouldn't have been a situation where the dream changed after the paper crane was switched. Furthermore, I also performed a divination using the paper crane above the gray fog and obtained the corresponding revelations... Klein said in a measured voice, "This is no longer within my scope of understanding. What do you want from me, Aaron?"

Aaron breathed out warm air that dispersed into white mist. "I want to pay a visit to the area outside Grimm Cemetery. I want to do it now, while it's still daytime. Can you protect me? I'll pay you one pound."

Heading over to the place that appeared in the dream now? He probably wouldn't encounter anything too strange during the day... Klein thought for a moment and said, "I can accept this request, but I suggest that you go back to the same cathedral and tell your dream to the bishop you're familiar with."

Aaron agreed, then said doubtfully, "Why do you always suggest that I go to the cathedral? I know, you've explained it before, in a very logical way, that if mystical powers exist in this world, then the Churches, which have been leading humanity, must be the ones with the strongest mystical powers, and if there are none, then at least we can go to the Church to get psychological comfort and corresponding connections. However, why do you suggest that I go to the cathedral for something that isn't considered too strange?"

Klein considered for two seconds, then replied seriously, "I'm a detective. I've come into contact with a lot of unusual things, so I understand the special nature of the Church. I also know when to ask for help."

"Really?" Aaron listened with a serious expression.

The corners of Klein's mouth curled up.

“Just kidding.

“Take it easy, Aaron. I’m going to change my clothes first. Uh, and also do the dishes.”

Having chatted with Aaron at the door for a long time without his thick coat, he turned rather stiff from the cold winds.

Taking this opportunity, Klein went to the washroom, went above the gray fog, and divined the degree of danger for this mission. He received the answer that there was almost no risk.

If he received a revelation indicating that it was dangerous, his plan was to reject the mission using the Church of Evernight as an excuse.

...

Hillston Borough, Myriad Star Cathedral.

“Sherlock, why don’t you hire a maid? As a great detective, you can afford to have several servants,” Aaron asked, as he led Klein to the Church of Evernight’s largest cathedral in Hillston Borough.

This was something that he had wanted to ask while in the carriage, but he had never found the opportunity to change the subject.

Klein sighed, and said heavily, “Aaron, let me tell you a story. There was a detective who hired two maids, a cook, and an assistant, and he was doing pretty well, but one day he took over a case and successfully homed in on the murderer, who was a very savage and cruel man. He sneaked into the detective’s house with the intention of revenge.

“The detective was a fighting expert, and in the end, he was only slightly injured, but two of his servants died because of him.

“Do you get it, Aaron?”

“I see,” Aaron’s voice had a hint of empathy. “Sherlock, I never knew that you’ve had such an experience.”

No, the main character has nothing to do with me. I just made up a story... It’s not like I can tell you directly that I’m involved in many strange and mystical matters, and that there will always be

unspeakable secrets in my house so that it's best I don't hire any servants... Klein looked forward and let out a long sigh.

The cleaning of his home was done twice a week, mostly by Mrs. Stelyn Sammer's maid. She was responsible for the most basic cleaning procedures, and each cleaning cost one soli.

While they were talking, the two of them had already entered the hall of the Myriad Star Cathedral.

It was dark, quiet, and devoid of candles, completely in line with the Church of Evernight's style.

At the very front of the hall was an altar engraved with a Dark Sacred Emblem. The stars were inlaid with self-illuminating pearls, and the crimson moon was made of rubies. The rest of the hall was filled with the darkness of the night.

With a single glance, he could see that the place was filled with specks of light as the crimson light illuminated the area, making the place extremely sacred.

But Klein felt that this was inferior to the design used by Saint Selena Cathedral in Tingen. That hall was pitch-black, with only light penetrating from the front through the fist-sized holes. It resembled a starry sky, making one feel awe from the bottom of one's heart.

However, there's a problem with that kind of design. At night, the effect would be gone... Klein took a seat at random, took off his half top hat and leaned on his black hardwood cane, while Aaron continued down the aisle to the confessional in search of the bishop.

Sitting in such a large hall and looking at the people who were concentrating on praying, Klein's heart suddenly became tranquil.

Come to think of it, this is only my third time entering the Goddess's cathedral... He let out a self-deprecating laugh.

...

Inside the Cathedral of Serenity at Winter County.

Leonard Mitchell put on his black trench coat and red gloves and entered the room of the high-ranking deacon, Crestet Cesimir.

“Congratulations, you have officially become a Red Glove. May the Goddess bless you.” Cesimir drew a crimson moon on his chest.

He still had his mouth covered with his high collar.

“Praise the Lady. The honor is mine.” Leonard raised his right hand and gestured four points in a clockwise fashion.

Cesimir didn’t say anything else and went straight to the point.

“According to your request, I’ve placed you in Soest’s team. He’s a Soul Assurer and possesses a mystical item. I’ve already ordered someone to prepare a Beyonder weapon for you that you’ll need.

“Your team will be in charge of a devil summoning case, and you’ll take into consideration certain clues to perform the search. For example, cases that have happened consecutively in Backlund and matters related to a tarot ritual.”

“Yes, Reverend Cesimir.” Leonard held no objections towards the mission.

This will be the beginning of my revenge... he silently said to himself.

...

West Borough, in the periphery of Grimm Cemetery.

Klein accompanied Dr. Aaron as they took quite a while to walk around the nearby woods, coughing from time to time as a result of the falling grayish-white dust.

“Maybe there isn’t a tree like that. Dreams can’t fully reflect reality.” Towards the end of the search, even Aaron was feeling a little uncertain himself.

Fortunately, I’m good at finding things... Klein pointed with his cane and said, “Let’s take a look over there and make it our final effort.”

“Alright.” Aaron gasped for a breath of air.

After a short walk, Aaron suddenly stopped and said, while pointing diagonally ahead, “Over there, over there!”

About a dozen meters away, a birch tree with a strip of bark around its trunk stripped off stood there quietly, as if it were waiting for them.

"It's identical to the one in my dream," Aaron said with conviction.

Klein smiled and said with some vigilance, "But there's no Will Auceptin."

Aaron got close to the birch tree, frowned for a while, then he suddenly pointed to the side of the tree and said, "Back then, Will Auceptin was sitting here, and he was pointing at the mud below him with his finger!"

Pointing at the mud below him? Klein stood at the side, looking down at the almost unwithered grass.

"You want to dig it up?"

Aaron nodded. "We've already found this place, so we should confirm what's here. Sherlock, go to the cemetery and borrow two shovels."

"It's better if I stay here. You go to the cemetery, I'm worried something might happen to you," Klein said cautiously.

"Alright." Aaron didn't refuse, and he immediately left the forest.

After a while, after offering some money, he returned with three shovels and a tomb keeper, and they began to dig.

While Klein was digging, he suddenly smelled something familiar. As the soil on the surface parted, the things below were gradually exposed.

It was the body of a child that was already greatly rotten!

His skin and flesh looked as if they were about to melt, and many bugs crawled in and out of his nose and mouth.

Clang!

The shovel fell from Aaron's hand and hit a rock.

He pointed to the legs of the corpse, his mouth moving frantically but he was unable to say a word.

Klein endured the nausea and looked closely, discovering that the child's left leg was obviously missing its lower half.

At the same time, Aaron took two steps back and fell to the ground, shouting sharply, "Will Auceptin! Will Auceptin!"

It was Will Auceptin's corpse!

Chapter 403: The Fate of a Private Detective

He's dead?

Will Auceptin is dead?

And he seems to have been dead for some time!

Could this be fake?

Klein looked at the body of the child in surprise and suspicion as many thoughts bubbled in his mind.

From what he knew, Will Auceptin was a special child who could be involved with a Sequence 1 of the Monster pathway, Snake of Mercury, in some way.

In the divination game he played, a casual "Doctor, your luck will get worse" was enough to make Aaron suffer from bad luck for an extended period of time. The paper crane he folded allowed Aaron's Astral Projection to be located in the spirit world and be instilled with artificial revelations. Even above the gray fog, Klein only received an inkling of his location and couldn't come to an effective conclusion... How could such a child die for no reason? He was dead before Dr. Aaron's dreams? What about his family?

Klein narrowed his eyes, and despite his intense nausea, he carefully examined the highly rotten body. He noticed some torn tarot cards in the surrounding soil.

His spiritual intuition told him that the corpse in front of him was most likely Will Auceptin.

It's really shocking and difficult to understand... I should go above the gray fog later and confirm if it's a fake death from Will Auceptin... Wait, what does this have to do with me? I had already decided not to get involved in this matter any further, in case I get entangled by some Snake of Mercury. This might be even more terrifying than Sealed Artifact 0-08... Klein snapped out of his daze and said to the terrified

tomb keeper and Dr. Aaron, who was on the verge of a mental breakdown.

“Call the police!”

“Okay! Okay!” The tomb keeper was taken aback at first before he repeated his reply.

With the shovel in hand, he turned and ran out of the woods, at a speed that was so fast that it appeared as though he was being chased by a zombie.

As expected, he’s just an ordinary person and isn’t cautious at all. In this kind of situation, shouldn’t he be wary of the people around him who might have malicious intent? By exposing your back, it would be easy for you to be hit by a shovel... Klein glanced at the back of the tomb keeper and shook his head with a sigh.

When he was a Nighthawk in Tingen, he had read a lot of case files and found out that many of the victims had ended up becoming victims of their companions.

Thinking of this, Klein walked to Dr. Aaron, bent down, and stretched out his hand.

“There’s nothing to be afraid of. He’s already dead.”

“...It’s the death that scares me.” Aaron calmed down a bit, and without accepting Klein’s help, he got up by himself.

His black frock coat was covered with dirt, and Klein felt his heart pain for the clothes for some baffling reason.

I’m the kind of person who can’t stand seeing anything valuable get damaged... He inwardly sighed with emotion.

Noticing that Aaron was still panicking, Klein laughed and said, “At such times, praying to the deity you believe in has quite a remarkable effect.”

“Is that so?” Aaron was stunned. He tapped his chest four times in a clockwise manner and chanted softly, “The Evernight Goddess stands higher than the cosmos and more eternal than eternity. Your devout believer prays for your blessing...”

After repeating this over and over again, he gradually calmed down, no longer feeling as terrified as before.

Klein drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest and silently whispered to himself, *God of Steam and Machinery, your completely unfaithful believer is begging for your blessings...*

As he spoke, he couldn't help but laugh at himself, suspecting that he might be smote to death by lightning on the spot.

However, lightning and thunder belong to the Lord of Storms, and it isn't in the domain of the God of Steam and Machinery... Klein thought in a relaxed manner.

After about 20 minutes, the two of them found themselves sitting in an interrogation room at a nearby police station.

During the testimony, Klein frankly informed the police that he was a private investigator who wasn't too sure of what was happening. As for Dr. Aaron, he described his dream in detail as the reason for digging to find the body.

Klein could tell that the police didn't believe him at all, but after they had gone out for a while, they immediately changed their attitudes, saying that there was nothing suspicious about Dr. Aaron and Detective Moriarty. All they had to do was sign their statements and leave.

Aaron was surprised, but Klein wasn't surprised. It was obvious that the Nighthawks had been involved.

The advantage of having the doctor head to the Myriad Star Cathedral in advance was demonstrated.

Before leaving the police station, Klein wasn't surprised to see a familiar figure. It was the Nighthawk who had entered his dream earlier.

The man on duty, who was probably a captain, was still wearing a gray trench coat and was obviously more resistant to the cold than Klein. His blue eyes swept past Klein's face without any signs of abnormality, pretending to be an ordinary senior inspector.

Klein, who was also pretending to be an ordinary private detective, nudged his glasses, put on half top hat, and left the station with Dr. Aaron in a carriage.

After instructing his carriage driver to head to Minsk Street first, Aaron turned to Klein and said, “Sherlock, do you think this will be the end of it?”

“If that body really belongs to Will Auceptin, then you shouldn’t be troubled any longer.” Klein paused and continued, “Aaron, have you found anything else that’s strange during this period of time? Regardless of what it is.”

Aaron thought about it and shook his head.

“No.”

“This is worth celebrating!” Klein sighed and said with a smile.

To him, this was the best way things could end with Will Auceptin’s matter. Although the paper crane Klein had folded above the gray fog wouldn’t reveal anything, and there would be no problems with any divination afterward, he was still a little worried that some Nighthawk would suddenly think of something and use it to find some clues. And now, with the death of Will Auceptin, the case might soon reach a dead end, put in the archives, and temporarily declared a closed case. No one would pay any more attention to it without any new developments.

Aaron relaxed and asked suspiciously, “Frankly, I don’t think my statement was very convincing. Why did the cops choose to believe it in the end?”

“I don’t know either,” Klein feigned puzzlement and said, “I thought I’d have to get my lawyer to take me home again—No, bail me out.”

Aaron smirked and said, “Sherlock, you seem to have a lot of experience in being sent to the police station?”

Klein laughed and replied in a deep voice, “It’s the fate of every private detective.”

...

Just as Klein and Aaron were being taken to the police station near Grimm Cemetery, Fors Wall was wearing a long black dress and a black bonnet with a fine mesh hanging down. She entered the silent cemetery and found the grave of Mrs. Aulisa.

She and Xio had gone to Empress Borough an hour ago to visit Viscount Glaint, and they had successfully gotten a verbal agreement for borrowing 400 pounds without any interest.

Viscount Glaint's only request was that the two Beyonders accompany him to the gathering Mr. A would convene tonight to ensure his safety. He was anxious to procure a Royal Jellyfish's venom crystal so that he could complete the concoction of the Apothecary potion.

Audrey had found the horn of an adult Flying Unicorn in the family treasury, and she had taken one out in the name of doing a biological experiment, effectively offsetting part of her debt.

She also put forward an additional condition for Viscount Glaint to get the help of Duke Negan's children to confirm if the dragon specimens in the treasury had a Thousand-faced Hunter and whether there were still light dots flashing inside.

When the loan was settled, Fors was in no hurry to pray to Mr. Fool to close the deal as quickly as possible, because it would make Xio intuitively turn suspicious if things developed too quickly.

Taking advantage of her free time, she changed her clothes and rented a horse carriage to get to Grimm Cemetery, which was located on the outskirts of West Borough.

Knowing the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility, Fors realized that the main ingredient that turned her into an Apprentice was the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Mrs. Aulisa. In a way, she had inherited her powers.

Therefore, she couldn't help but pay a visit and put a bouquet of flowers in front of Mrs. Aulisa's grave and thank her.

It was early winter, and most of the flowers had long since withered, but Fors still bought a handful of plain flowers.

These flowers were grown in a greenhouse and were quite expensive.

Thank you, Emperor Roselle, for your invention... Fors said inwardly in a most sincere manner.

As far as she knew, most of the flowers that the nobles used for their winter banquets came from greenhouses, while a tiny portion was delivered directly from the warm south by airships.

This was more than the average middle-class worker could bear.

Standing in front of the black tombstone, Fors took a deep look at the photograph of Mrs. Aulisa before bending down to lay down the flowers and whispered, "Thank you."

She immediately straightened up, closed her eyes, and quietly recalled the past.

At this moment, she heard a slightly-aged voice.

"You really are a good and kind-hearted lady."

Fors opened her eyes and turned her head, realizing that Mr. Lawrence, from the Abraham family, had also appeared there at some point. He was also holding a bouquet of plain but elegant flowers in his hand.

"No, this is not goodness, nor is it kindness. Mrs. Aulisa once gave me, a person who had lost her mother, an unforgettable period of warmth," Fors said sincerely.

Her eyes were suddenly moist.

Lawrence, who only had wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, put down the flowers and sighed.

"This shows that you value relationships."

After chatting for a while, when Fors was about to leave, Lawrence, who was waving her goodbye, suddenly began to cough violently.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

He coughed until his legs buckled and fell to the ground. It seemed as if he would die at any moment from suffocation.

As a doctor who had graduated from an accredited school, Fors didn't hesitate to turn around, crouch down, and begin performing first aid.

After a while, Lawrence's condition finally stabilized. He wiped the saliva from the corner of his mouth and smiled at Fors.

"Lady, can you take me back to the hotel?" "No problem." Fors helped him to his feet.

Lawrence looked ahead, his eyes a little out of focus. He coughed lightly, and he said with a sad and self-deprecating laugh, "My life might be coming to an end..."

Chapter 404: Entrust

West Borough, Carlpensa Hotel.

Fors helped Lawrence into his room and laid him down on the bed.

It was a rather luxurious hotel, with thick, soft, grayish-yellow carpets everywhere except the washroom. On the walls hung imitations of famous oil paintings.

Lawrence gasped for air and said, “Thank you, Miss Wall, and please forgive a dying man for not being able to bow.”

“No, Mr. Lawrence, your problem has eased. As a former medical doctor, I can tell you without a doubt that you can still live. After some rest, we’ll go to a clinic or a hospital,” Fors consoled him.

Lawrence smiled. “I know my physical condition very well. You don’t have to comfort me. Besides, I’m an amateur astrologer. I already had a premonition that I’m going to die in this hotel in Backlund.”

Aside from some superficial concealment, everything he said was the truth. He was already close to eighty, and he was no longer that robust and spirited young man from before. If not for the Sequence potions that elevated his constitution, he might have already been buried in some random cemetery.

Originally, Lawrence thought he could live for another ten years, but who would have thought that he would encounter a rebellion caused by the former Traveler Botis. He suffered relatively serious injuries at the hands of the Aurora Order, and his remaining descendants all died in that disaster.

This dealt him a great blow, and he almost didn’t manage to recover from it. The search for his brothers and their descendants in Backlund had only resulted in him receiving news of their deaths, dealing him a significant blow to his mental wellbeing once more.

Compounded by all these things, Lawrence clearly felt that his life had come to an end.

His initial plan was to return to the graves of Laubero and Aulisa again and present a bouquet of flowers. He would then return immediately

and meet with the other members of the Elder Council to set things in order before his death, but being an elderly man, his condition was beyond his control.

Without waiting for a response from Fors, Lawrence struggled to retrieve a palm-sized notebook from the inside pocket of his half-open coat.

The hard paper cover of the notebook was bronze green, giving off a very ancient feeling.

On its surface, the words: “I came, I saw, I record” was written in ancient Feysac.

Lawrence placed the notebook on the quilt in front of his chest and took a deep breath.

“Miss. Wall, if I die here, can you help me send it to Pritz Harbor?”

“Mr. Lawrence, you’ll be fine,” Fors emphasized.

At the same time, she subconsciously glanced at the notebook and found that it wasn’t thick at all. There were a total of three types of papers inside, one of which was a yellow type of parchment which had very few pages. The other was yellowishbrown goatskin and the number of pages was in the middle of the range. The last was comprised of ordinary white paper and was the most common.

Lawrence laughingly said with great difficulty, “I mean, Miss. Wall, will you help?”

“Pritz Harbor isn’t far. It’s not even a trip. If it needs to be rushed, then I can even make the round trip in half a day by taking the steam locomotive.” Fors nodded.

Lawrence breathed a sigh of relief as his mind seemed to recover a little.

“After I die, wait ten minutes. Retrieve the glowing object from my body, and then send it along with this notebook to Dorian Gray at the Pritz Harbor’s Fishermen Association. The forty-two pounds in cash in my wallet will be the reward and my gratitude. As for these clothes of mine, let it turn to ash along with me.”

“No, you don’t need to give me anything. No, you’ll be fine, Mr. Lawrence,” Fors said earnestly.

As if he hadn’t heard her, Lawrence whispered to himself, “Maybe Dorian will give you additional rewards, but it depends on you... I believe you. From Aulisa’s matter, I can tell that you’re a good girl...”

He suddenly seemed to turn lucid as he said to Fors, “Ms. Wall, can you go down to the first floor and bring me a jug of water? I don’t know when the waiter will come over.”

“No problem.” Without thinking, Fors took a water jug and walked out of the room.

After walking a few steps, she suddenly felt that something was amiss. The water jug in her hand was heavy, and there was obviously a lot of water in it.

Just as she was about to turn around and ask, she suddenly sensed a strong fluctuation of spirituality in the room.

That was... For a moment Fors froze, and then she understood what Mr. Lawrence was trying to do.

As death approached, he could clearly sense that something was wrong with his body. He was afraid of losing control and turning into a monster.

He wanted to die as a human, not a monster, so he chose to end his own life.

That was the last form of decency for a Beyonder.

Of course, if he had turned into a monster, all his plans would have come to naught.

With this in mind, Fors became dejected. She waited outside for nearly ten minutes before she pushed open the door and entered.

She saw Lawrence lying silently on the bed, looking like he had aged considerably. Beside him was a “diamond” the size of an eye.

The light which shone in through the window was constantly refracted by the "diamond," forming a scene as beautiful as the radiance of the stars.

Fors sighed and performed a careful examination. She found that the cause of Lawrence's death was the most ordinary form of cardiac arrest.

...

Cherwood Borough. 15 Minsk Street.

Klein rested for a while after getting home. He then went above the gray fog, having plans to divine the situation with Will Auceptin.

He had the paper crane fly out of the trash pile in the corner and made it land on the long bronze table in front of him. Then, he took out the topaz pendant that was wrapped around his sleeve.

As he held the spirit pendulum in his left hand, Klein used Cogitation to adjust his condition before recalling the scenes he had seen in the woods outside the cemetery.

He might not have noticed some of the details, but it was certain that his spirituality wouldn't miss any. This divination was mainly about using this point and relying on the gray fog to eliminate all distractions.

After finishing his preparations, Klein took out a goatskin parchment and wrote the divination statement: "Will Auceptin is completely dead."

Then, he pressed the paper crane next to the divination sentence, almost causing the topaz pendant to touch the words.

After entering a state of Cogitation and completing all the steps of the spirit dowsing, Klein opened his eyes and looked at the result.

The topaz pendant was rotating counterclockwise at a fast frequency and high amplitude.

It was a negative result.

That meant that Will Auceptin wasn't completely dead!

This... Klein was surprised, but it seemed to be within his expectations.

He thought for a moment, then he changed the divination statement: "That corpse was Will Auceptin's." This time, the spirit pendulum gave a positive result.

The body did belong to Will Auceptin!

An idea came to Klein's mind, and he wrote a new divination statement: "Will Auceptin's corpse will resurrect."

After a few moments of calmly performing the divination, Klein saw the revelation.

The pendulum was rotating counterclockwise with a fast frequency.

That meant that Will Auceptin's corpse wouldn't be resurrected; or in other words, no reanimations!

It looks like Will Auceptin had voluntarily or was forced to abandon his previous body, and he is surviving in another way... This matter has something to do with the Snake of Mercury? Klein tried to divine additional information, but he failed repeatedly, including the statement: "Will Auceptin's present state."

However, he repeated the divination using dream divination and inquired "Will Auceptin's current location." He received a similar scene: a dark room with the sound of running water.

However, the feeling it gave him seemed to be a little different.

Forget it, there's no need to waste any more time on this. I'm not planning to get involved anyway... Klein put away his spirit pendulum and prepared to return to the real world.

Through the prior divination and everything that had happened before, he had a theory about Will Auceptin, but he couldn't confirm it.

He suspected that Will Auceptin was another Snake of Mercury!

As a Sequence 1, a Snake of Mercury wasn't the only one. There could be up to three in existence at the same time!

The Snake of Fate, who wielded destiny naturally, could locate Aaron's Astral Projection through the paper crane and show him a false

revelation. Without a doubt, it also had the ability to change a person's fate.

For some reason, Will Auceptin had become weak and was under the threat of the second Snake of Mercury. Everything he did was to escape his counterpart.

As for the reason for their conflict, the answer was simple.

Without a Sequence 0, there could be three Sequence 1s at the same time, but once there was a Sequence 0, there would be no Sequence 1s!

Regarding this sentence, the formula of the Black Emperor potion clearly stated the truth.

One of the main ingredients of the recipe was: two Beyonder characteristics of a Prince of Abolition!

Prince of Abolition was Sequence 1 of the Black Emperor pathway!

As a Sequence 1, if one wanted to advance to Sequence 0, then one had to obtain all the Beyonder characteristics of the other two Sequence 1s of the same pathway!

With this guess in mind, Klein was increasingly afraid of getting involved with Will Auceptin's case.

If my deduction is correct, it would be a genuine "fight between deities," and I can't afford to get myself involved... Klein's spirituality descended, and he disappeared from the ancient palace above the gray fog.

...

In Empress Borough, in an inconspicuous house, the Beyonder gathering organized by Mr. A proceeded as scheduled.

Fors and Xio had changed their clothes, and they accompanied Viscount Glaint, who was wearing an iron-black mask, into the hall. They randomly chose a seat and sat down.

Viscount Glaint wrote down his needs to the attendants before the gathering officially began. He also prayed to the goddess that there would be a response later.

As usual, Fors maintained her usual languidness and, in a rare instance, covered herself with a hood, concealing her face with the shadows.

She was thinking about the situation with Mr. Lawrence.

She knew very clearly what that “diamond” the size of an eye was. It was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by him. However, for the time being, she was unable to confirm what Sequence it belonged to.

Fors had casually flipped through the notebook, only to find that many of the pages were still blank. The written content was filled with all sorts of strange, odd, and mysterious symbols and magic labels, exceeding whatever she knew.

What it is isn’t important. What’s important is that I keep my promise... Fors warned herself.

At this moment, Mr. A, who was seated on a single sofa and was wearing an exaggerated hood, said hoarsely, “I have a mission.

“Help me find people who believe in the so-called ‘Fool.’”

Ah? Fors instantly snapped back to her senses.

Chapter 405: "Cult"

"The Fool?" The Beyonders who attended Mr. A's gathering either ruminated over the phrase or conversed with their companions to discuss whether they had ever met anyone who had a similar faith.

"When did such a cult appear?" someone asked in a low voice.

At this point, Mr. A made the attendant beside him hold up a blackboard with a few lines of words written in the Loen language.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

As the attendees examined the blackboard, Mr. A said in a hoarse and jarring voice, "Do not use Hermes to read what's written here. Even more so for Jotun, Elvish, Dragonese, and ancient Hermes. You shouldn't even write the corresponding descriptions; otherwise, there is a high probability that something terrible will happen.

"Help me find believers in The Fool. Of course, they might also be followers of the mysterious ruler above the gray fog or the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck. As long as there's a clue, inform me immediately. The reward I'll provide will be so handsome that it will far exceed your imagination!"

"This description... It sounds like an incredible existence. I've only seen similar descriptions in the ancient texts of the seven gods!" a gathering member exclaimed.

His companion shook his head and said, "The beings which many cults believe in have similar descriptions."

"Is it really a cult?" The other gathering members were stunned when they heard their discussion.

"Likely. Typically, when we summon a creature from the spirit world, we might have three lines describing it, but one of the lines would be about 'the blessed one of someone' or 'that who belongs to.' It wouldn't be in this format!" A gathering member who was well-versed in mysticism gave an explanation.

As they vehemently conversed, Fors was nearly dumbfounded.

Isn't that the honorific name of Mr. Fool? Even though it's described in the Loen language, I'm sure of it! Why would Mr. A want to find the believers of Mr. Fool? Is the Aurora Order behind this? Fors's mind was in a mess.

She knew that Mr. A was a member of the Aurora Order because of a particular "terrorist organization" had announced its responsibility in the assassination of Intis Ambassador Bakerland.

After a brief moment of astonishment, Fors subconsciously began to examine herself, afraid that someone would discover that she was already a member of the Tarot Club and that, in some sense, she was a Blessed of The Fool.

I just recited the honorific name of The Fool according to the ancient Hermes on that piece of paper and was pulled above the gray fog. No one knows about this, and I don't have to be afraid of being investigated... But there's a link to that piece of paper with Mr. Fool's honorific name written on it. It was hidden in a book we borrowed from the Viscount Glaint... Thoughts rapidly flashed through Fors's mind.

The Fool that doesn't belong to this era... Isn't that the description I saw on that piece of paper? I even dreamed of an evil spirit! At the same time, Xio remembered the incident that had frightened her, but her long experience as a bounty hunter had kept her from revealing anything unusual.

And then, as she recalled, she thought about the origin of the piece of paper.

It was hidden in the bookcase of "History of the Loen Kingdom's Aristocracy"... That book was borrowed from Viscount Glaint's study...

Suddenly, a name flashed in both Fors's and Xio's minds at the same time: *Viscount Glaint!*

At that moment, Viscount Glaint was looking at the blackboard and said to himself with interest, "This honorific name is very rare.

"But it sounds very impressive!"

Just as he finished his sentence, he looked to his side in puzzlement, asking Fors and Xio, “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“Nothing.” Xio and Fors rapidly shook their heads at the same time.

...

After dinner, in an elegantly decorated house.

Audrey brought the huge golden retriever, Susie, into the living room under the guidance of her psychology teacher, Escalante. She was attending the “academic” meeting that had been agreed upon last week.

Her maid and bodyguard stayed behind while she walked with Susie into a spacious activity room.

In the activity room, be it for the atmosphere or some other reason, the gas lamps were not lit. The room was lit by goldplated candle lamps on the coffee table and cupboard.

Before Audrey could take a good look at her surroundings, she saw a gentleman in his thirties walking towards her. He wore a gray tailcoat.

“This is the owner of this place, Mr. Stephen Hampres, a furniture merchant.” the long-haired Escalante introduced him.

She was just about to tell him Audrey’s identity when Hampres chuckled and said, “Escalante, don’t say anything. Let me have a chance at guessing.”

He had a neatly trimmed mustache and charming dark brown eyes. He appeared very gentle and elegant, nothing like a furniture merchant but more like a university lecturer.

After seriously sizing up Audrey a few times, he smiled and said, “Escalante only mentioned that you were her student. Heh heh, I believe you’re a cultured noble lady, and you aren’t someone who only looks good. There’s no need for you to worry about a decline in the quality of your life...

“You’re a little excited, very curious, and a relatively simple but also full of love...

"Of course, the most obvious point is that you're very beautiful, just like an angel!"

He made a final joke, pressed his hand to his chest, bowed, and said, "Welcome, the beautiful Miss Angel."

You're right, as expected of a member of the Psychology Alchemists. However, what you managed to observe was the me from a few months ago. It's all a facade I've put on for myself... Audrey opened her mouth in surprise and astonishment.

"Did you know me before, Mr. Hampres?"

She didn't let her shocked expression linger too long on her face, because such emotions were meant to be instantaneous and wouldn't last too long.

If anyone were to be surprised for several seconds, then it meant that their performance was most likely an act.

Audrey didn't notice this at first, but after watching others "act" all this time, she naturally came up with a lot of rules.

"No, I still don't know you. This is just the basics of being a psychology enthusiast." Hampres chuckled.

Before he could finish his sentence, Audrey had already completed her observations and made a corresponding judgment based on her surroundings.

His attire and the furnishings of his house all indicate that he's a person who cares deeply about how people view him...

The sapphire on the ring of his left hand doesn't look small, but its actual quality is very ordinary. There are no symbols or magic labels on it... His finances aren't as good as he presents them to be... He's vain...

Even though he was very enthusiastic just now, the way he stands there, the direction in which his feet point, and the changes in his emotional colors all indicate that he still has many concerns and is on his guard...

He sincerely commended me on my looks, but it wasn't in the way a man would look at a woman. There are signs of him using facial

products, and his eyebrows are definitely drawn. His skills are inferior to my make-up maidservant, Solia, but they're better than mine... The cologne he uses is "Confusion," something that I've only seen women use before... Yes, he probably likes men, and the role he plays is the weaker one in the relationship...

At the same time, Audrey expressed her longing skillfully.

"I'd love to have your observational powers, Mr. Hampres."

As she spoke, she maintained a faint smile while being introduced to the other seven or eight people in the activity room under Hampres's and Escalante's lead.

The lovers of both mysticism and psychology were either descendants of fallen aristocrats, associate professors at universities, or the children of the rich. For example, the father of a young man was the owner of Philip's Department Store, the most famous department store in Backlund.

In the exchange that followed, Audrey basically only listened. The only time she spoke was by asking questions, fully expressing her curiosity and yearning.

In this "academic" discussion, Escalante and Hampres deliberately mentioned the Body of Heart and Mind, as well as the spirit world and the collective subconscious. They also shared some relatively unique points of view, allowing Audrey to gradually understand some of the questions she had accumulated all this time.

When the discussion ended and they were out of the house, Audrey glanced at Escalante beside her and asked, with a little naivety, "Ms. Escalante, when will I-I be as good in psychology as Mr. Hampres?"

Escalante curled the corners of her lips and slightly tilted her head as she looked at her.

"Very soon..."

...

At night, Klein, who was about to get into bed, once again appeared above the gray fog.

Despite being a little sleepy, he was jolted awake by the news Miss Magician had reported.

The Aurora Order knows of The Fool? They know of my honorific name? The True Creator has locked onto me? Klein abruptly sat up straight, as though he was about to face an attack.

He quickly rejected the final theory. If the True Creator had indeed locked onto him, Mr. A would have long visited him on the pretext of collecting a copper penny for the gas meter. Perhaps, even a Saint might appear.

That is to say, only The Fool and his corresponding honorific name are known, and the clues point to Backlund... Who leaked the news? Klein frowned as he carefully thought about it.

Soon, he discovered a possibility.

Little Sun has recently chanted my honorific name, and it happened when he was interacting with a member of the exploratory team who was corrupted by the True Creator... He held a sacrificial ritual, and there were likely symbols corresponding to The Fool at the scene. The ancient palace above the gray fog appeared.... So, the True Creator sensed the existence of The Fool and confirmed that I was the one who had been sacrilegious, no— harassing, no that's not right either— spying on him...

Also, Little Sun used the All-Black Eye at that time, which contains the mental corruption of the True Creator... Through that, "He" has confirmed that my Blessed and believers are in Backlund?

I can't take the All-Black Eye out in the future!

Having roughly understood the problem, Klein was left with another problem.

Mr. A announced the bounty for Mr. Fool's believers at a not-soprivate, relatively open Beyonder gathering. Is he just dumb, or is he deliberately "fishing?"

Sigh, the Aurora Order members are all bigoted lunatics. Their brains are mostly damaged, so it's impossible to deduce their real intentions!

This is as the saying goes, as long as I'm crazy, you won't be able to guess what I'm thinking?

Chapter 406: A Joyous But Extremely Helpless Reality

Above the gray fog, the magnificent palace stood silently.

Klein drummed his fingers rhythmically on the edge of the long bronze table, concentrating on what he could do in the face of the threat of the Aurora Order and Mr. A.

While having a hard time figuring out the other party's intentions, he instinctively came up with an idea.

Report Mr. A! Report illegal gatherings!

Klein could very easily learn of the location where Mr. A held the gathering through Miss Magician, and thus, he would be able to easily report it to the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punisher, or the Machinery Hivemind in secret.

An Oracle of the Aurora Order was bound to garner enough attention!

When that happens, Mr. A's safety would probably be at risk, so he probably wouldn't have the time or effort to track down the believers of The Fool.

The problem, however, was that this was bound to implicate a group of innocent Beyonders, and Klein suspected that this was the reason why Mr. A directly offered a reward for the believers of The Fool.

Perhaps he had long planned an escape. Once someone reports him, he would be able to confirm without a doubt that The Fool's believers were among the previous gathering members.

As for who it was exactly, that wasn't important. Mr. A and the lunatics of the Aurora Order were definitely capable of taking exhaustive measures!

And once these Beyonders fell into their hands, many of them would be unable to hide their secrets. The Aurora Order, or the Shepherd pathway which represented the True Creator, are the best at corrupting others.

When the ideology of a Beyonder was completely twisted and once they believed in the True Creator wholeheartedly, what else could be kept a secret?

It's not like there's no other way. It's best not to report it... Klein leaned back in his chair, collected his thoughts, and reorganized the entire matter.

As he was thinking, he suddenly realized a problem.

There were no believers or Blessed of The Fool in this world!

Even the Tarot Club only had a few members, and no one had divulged the relevant information.

In other words, the Aurora Order wouldn't be able to find any relevant clues... There's nothing to worry about... The only bad outcome is that The Fool is now targeted by the True Creator. Although being targeted by an evil god isn't a pleasant feeling, it basically wouldn't affect anything else... Klein nodded thoughtfully.

He had thought it through very clearly. The only flaw in this matter was that he had once used the title of The Fool, written in the language of ancient Hermes, as a password for an anonymous account. However, with the sacrificial and bestowal rituals having proven useful, the account had long been abandoned and had long since been forgotten.

Since the last month and a half, no one had been noticed by Klein for copying the password, so it was possible to deduce the actual situation.

As such, bank employees, who had been in contact with the password but apparently do not understand mysticism, wouldn't be able to reveal it to anyone, and Beyonders would at most make requests in the Loen language, so even if they find the right person, it's not possible to connect the content described in the Loen language with that of the ancient Hermes password.

If anyone had copied it down, I would be the first to know and would be able to respond effectively... Besides, even if someone finds the password, it would be difficult to trace it back to Sherlock Moriarty. I use a variety of means every time... Miss Justice is also sufficiently careful when saving money... While rapping the table, Klein relaxed and said with a chuckle, "You believe that The Fool has many Blessed

and believers and that this would result in many clues that cannot be hidden?

“Wrong, especially wrong! There’s only one believer and Blessed of The Fool! And that’s me!”

When he said that, he couldn’t help but let out a self-deprecating laugh.

“It doesn’t seem like it’s something that I should be proud of...”

I need to be a little careful for the time being. I shouldn’t go around using the banner of The Fool... Klein reminded himself and went back to answering Miss Magician’s prayers.

He adjusted his posture, and said in a low, gentle voice, “Don’t worry about it.”

...

Don’t worry about it... When Fors received the answer, she was surprised but also felt that it was only right.

In the eyes of Mr. Fool, the Aurora Order is nothing but a bunch of ants!

Fors once again recited his honorific name in a low voice, and she curiously asked, “Honorable Mr. Fool, which existence does the Aurora Order believe in?”

Then, she saw Mr. Fool sitting on a high back chair in the middle of the gray fog. He leisurely said, “The True Creator.”

The True Creator... Fors’s eyes widened as she instantly understood why Mr. A suddenly sought out the believers of The Fool.

With the help of the Tarot Club, that Sun youth in the City of Silver had successfully exposed the abnormality of the exploratory team and thwarted the True Creator’s ploy!

Behind this incident is a confrontation and struggle between Mr. Fool and the True Creator... Fors didn’t dare to ask any further, and she quickly recounted her meeting with the members of the Abraham family. She also mentioned Lawrence’s will, the strange notebook, and the Beyonder characteristic he had left behind.

“Honorable Mr. Fool, what should I do?” she asked for advice with uncertainty.

What should you do? Miss Magician really is lucky... Why haven’t I encountered such a good thing... Klein responded with a chuckle, “Follow the true desires in your heart.”

He wasn’t the least bit worried that Dorian Gray, from Pritz Harbor’s Fishermen Association, would harm Miss Magician, because he knew she had two more stones on her bracelet, allowing her to teleport through the spirit world twice.

Follow the true desires in my heart? Fors lowered her head in thought.

“I understand. Thank you, Mr. Fool.”

She decided to buy a steam locomotive ticket tomorrow. Using this mode of transportation, it would take a little over an hour to get from Backlund to Pritz Harbor, or maybe less.

After reporting everything, Fors requested to hold a sacrificial and bestowal ritual. After receiving a positive response, she exchanged 600 pounds in cash for the Sheriff Beyonder characteristic.

Holding up the fist-shaped object comprised of black iron, dark red, and silver colors, as well as its beautiful spiritual radiance, Fors felt joy and admiration.

Xio had long gathered the supplementary ingredients, so she would soon be promoted to Sequence 8... And I don’t know when I’ll become a Trickmaster... I hope Mr. Hanged Man and the others can help me find the appropriate Beyonder ingredients as soon as possible...

Xio had been subconsciously acting as an Arbiter, so she didn’t have to worry about her digestion of the Sequence 9 potion, but once she becomes a Sheriff, what should she do? Should I ask permission from Mr. Fool to teach her the “acting method”... or should I simply suggest that she sneak into the police force?

...

At the end of the long, mottled table, Klein looked at the thick stack of cash in front of him and carefully counted it several times.

Through this method, I would have 1,230 pounds. I would still be short of 300 pounds to obtain a single Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredient. Of course, 1,500 pounds is the minimum price, and the actual transaction price is usually much higher than this...

Where else can I get money these days?

As soon as the bicycle patent is granted, shall I sell a portion of the shares?

Yes, I almost forgot how special the Tarot Club is. The Werewolf Beyonder characteristic cannot be sold in Backlund for now, so as to avoid being discovered by High-Sequence Beyonders from the Rose School of Thought. But I can always sell it elsewhere! I'll let The World entrust Mr. Hanged Man to sell it at the Sonia Sea at the next gathering. I'll offer a corresponding amount of the commission as his reward.

After subtracting the costs, the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic should give me at least 1000 pounds. It will be more than enough for a single Sequence 6 Beyonder ingredient.

Klein quickly came up with a plan and decided upon it.

He found it a little regrettable that Miss Xio didn't seem to have much money. After she became a Sheriff, even if she could quickly digest the potion, it would still take her a long time to buy the Interrogator's Beyonder characteristic. And if the Abraham family were to take interest in Miss Magician, his subsequent Astrologer potion formula would no longer be marketable.

What a pity... Klein sighed and returned to the real world.

...

Wednesday morning.

Klein didn't suffer from insomnia due to being targeted by the True Creator and the Aurora Order's pursuit. He slept till daybreak and happily went out to buy a Desi pie for breakfast.

There was no doubt that Desi pie required sweet iced tea to match it.

As he enjoyed the food and flipped through the newspapers, he discovered the advertisement for the Ernst Firm and learned that there

would be a Beyonder gathering convened by Eye of Wisdom tomorrow night.

This time, I'll be able to request to purchase the relevant Beyonder ingredients... But there's a high chance that it wouldn't be available. Even if there's something, it will be supplementary ingredients like the hair of a Deep-sea Naga... Klein seriously considered the channels in which he could find the ingredients.

He spread out his left hand and counted with his fingers.

From the Tarot Club, there are the outlets of Little Sun, Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and the rest. Beyond that, I have Eye of Wisdom's gathering; Miss Bodyguard and Maric, but I shouldn't contact them if possible for the time being. Also, hmm... Yes, I have Vampire Emlyn White. Didn't he mention that he would write to ask some powerful Sanguines? That's what social connections can bring about!

Coming to this thought, Klein immediately decided to go to the Harvest Church to wait for Emlyn White.

Although it was impossible for the Aurora Order to track him down, it still gave him a sense of urgency, making him want to gather the Beyonder ingredients as soon as possible. One he digested his potion, he would quickly advance to Sequence 6.

Ten in the morning, South of the Bridge, Rose Street.

In his double-breasted frock coat, Klein took off his half top hat and strolled into the rather small Harvest Church.

At first glance, he saw the giant-like Father Utravsky and Emlyn White who was dressed in brown priest robes.

The latter was wiping the candle lamps with a numb look on his face, as though he would rather be dead.

What a coincidence... Wait, don't tell me he's here for the entire day? He only returns home at night? Klein casually found a seat and sat down. There were less than five devotees in the entire cathedral.

Emlyn White also saw him and put down the rag. He walked over and sat beside him.

The vampire's expression suddenly became lively. He raised his chin and said with a chuckle, "You came here suddenly because you have something you need my help with, right?"

Chapter 407: The True Adorer

Inside the Harvest Church.

Klein tilted his head to glance at Emlyn White. Without ruining the serene atmosphere, he deliberately suppressed his voice and laughed, returning with a question.

"Are you short on money?"

As soon as the words left his mouth, he felt as if he were asking if Emlyn knew about the multi-level marketing company, Amway.

Emlyn was first taken aback before he scoffed.

"Don't insult a noble Sanguine with money!"

Klein instantly sneered. Looking at the tall and brawny Father Utravsky in front of him, he said rather casually, "According to what I know, those handmade dolls are not cheap. They can even be called expensive, especially those that are as tall as a human."

"..." Emlyn gaped his mouth in an attempt to retort, but he failed to say a word.

After a moment of silence, he coughed lightly, feigned indifference, and said, "Tell me, what is it that you want my help with? I'm not a Sanguine who likes riddles."

Klein didn't look at the vampire next to him. He smiled and said, "I have a friend who is about to advance. He needs to collect the relevant Beyonder ingredients. I wonder if you can help?"

"Are you doubting the capabilities of a Sanguine?" Emlyn White said arrogantly. "Even if I don't have them, I can write and inquire from the nobler Excellencies."

That's what I want... Klein immediately responded with a deluge of words, "Mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter and 100 ml of its blood. Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow and five strands of a Deep-sea Naga. As long as I can get any of these, I will pay you the corresponding price. The cheaper the price, the more you will be rewarded."

He purposefully increased the number of supplementary ingredients to avoid any losses.

Upon hearing this description without any stuttering, Emlyn White suddenly felt as if he had fallen into a trap of sophistry.

He calmed his emotions and said, “The cost for the Beyonder ingredients is at least 100 pounds, while supplementary ingredients are at least 10 pounds. Although I’m not clear of the level of the things you want, I believe that they’re definitely not cheap or common. Otherwise, you wouldn’t have come to me for help.”

Very smart... Klein laughed.

“Deal!

At this moment, Emlyn White had a deep suspicion that he was asking for too little.

Therefore, he added, “Mr. Detective, do you have any clues on removing the psychological cues?”

Seeing that Father Utravsky was concentrating on his prayers at the altar ahead of them, Klein turned to glance at the vampire and said, “I have the simplest method.” “What?” Emlyn White’s red eyes lit up.

“Defeat Bishop Utravsky and snatch his Mental Terror Candle away,” Klein said with a chuckle. “After you meet up with your parents, you should possess the strength needed. Are three Sanguines not the match of a single Dawn Paladin?”

The corners of Emlyn’s mouth twitched as his expression collapsed.

“We lost.

“We couldn’t beat him...

“My parents were nearly captured. That Mental Terror Candle is really strange...”

So you’ve already tried... The entire family almost converted to become believers of Earth Mother... Three Sanguines weren’t even able to defeat Father Utravsky? With the help of the Mental Terror Candle and the Blood Transfuser, Father Utravsky is that terrifying? Or are

vampires too weak? However, all the rumors point towards vampires being rather powerful... Klein said in thought, "Then you can write a letter and ask for the help of the noble Excellencies. There shouldn't be a lack of powerful experts among the Sanguine."

Emlyn White answered with a numb expression, "They refused." Suddenly, he looked at Klein with hope.

"Can you defeat Father Utravsky? Or could your friend beat him?"

After receiving the Sun Brooch and the Biological Poison Bottle and digesting most of the potion, I originally thought that I would be able to defeat Father Utravsky in my Spirit Body state. However, your description just now made me uncertain. Is the Mental Terror Candle that bizarre? This kind of Sealed Artifact is obviously great at restraining Spirit Bodies... Klein rationally shook his head.

"No way."

He quickly changed the subject.

"Why would those noble Excellencies of the Sanguine refuse your request? To them, this should be a simple favor." Emlyn White's face instantly turned ashen.

"They say that Father Utravsky is a Blessed of Earth Mother. They do not wish to enter into direct conflict with him. They are studying means to remove the psychological cue. For example, they are venturing deep into the Sonia Sea, the Fog Sea, and the Berserk Sea, in search of the dragons that have long secluded themselves."

He added with a smile even uglier than a weeping face, "By the time they figure it out or find a dragon well-versed in the psyche domain, I might have already become a devout believer of Earth Mother... I'm beginning to appreciate how precious life is and how joyful a harvest is."

A Blessed of Earth Mother? Father Utravsky is a Blessed of Earth Mother? It's no wonder that he has so many mystical items... From the looks of it, as a powerful pirate, suddenly switching to the Earth Mother wasn't a simple matter... Klein sighed, and then he felt a sense of lingering fear.

He had almost agreed to Emlyn White's request to attempt to defeat Father Utravsky.

If I lose, then I might even be locked up in the basement and forced into confinement. If I win, I might just offend another deity, no— there's no way of me winning. The Blessed of Earth Mother definitely has an appropriate trump card. If it wasn't for Father Utravsky suppressing his split personality, then I probably wouldn't have been able to defeat him...

Klein wisely didn't pursue the topic. He once again looked at Father Utravsky and said, "You can try to find an organization called the Psychology Alchemists."

Otherwise, you'll have to wait for Miss Justice of our Tarot Club to become a Psychiatrist. By then, you might be reluctant to break away from the faith of Earth Mother... Klein silently added.

To him, it was best if Emlyn White also joined the Psychology Alchemists. That way, if Miss Justice encountered any problems in the organization, he could help her with other resources, and Klein wouldn't always have to summon himself, who was the trinity of The Fool, a Blessed, and a believer.

"Psychology Alchemists? I've never heard of it." Emlyn shook his head disdainfully. "It must be a secret organization that recently appeared."

"This organization has existed for one or two hundred years, at the very least." Klein denied his statement.

"For a Sanguine with a long lifespan, one or two hundred years means it recently appeared. Among the noble Excellencies, a nap might be as long as a century," Emlyn White said proudly.

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he looked ahead, cleared his throat, and said, "Do you know how to contact that organization?"

Klein was going to answer that there was a man in the Tingen City's asylum named Dr. Daxter Guderian, who's a member of the Psychology Alchemists, but he stopped those words just before they came out of his mouth.

With the True Creator targeting me, it's best that I don't get involved with people or matters in Tingen. There's a certain risk of exposure, and once exposed, with the Aurora Order's madness, they would definitely not let Benson and Melissa go... Klein slightly shook his head and said, "I've only heard of this organization.

"You can write and ask the other Sanguine."

Emlyn White was disappointed and stopped talking about it. He turned his head to look at Klein and said, "I'm guessing your friend who's about to advance is you."

Klein looked forward without a care and replied leisurely, "Congratulations, you got it right."

"..." Emlyn White was stunned. This was completely different from what he had expected!

Noticing his change, Klein laughed softly.

"Mr. White, the most suitable job for you isn't to be an apothecary but to be an actor."

Emlyn was stunned at first, but he immediately raised his head arrogantly and said, "I'm a deep, noble Sanguine. I don't rely on my looks to make a living."

Do you think I'm praising you for being handsome? Klein slowly stood up and laughed.

"No, I mean, you are very talented at comedy."

While Emlyn White's expression froze, he squeezed his way out to the aisle and said, "Don't forget what I entrusted you with."

...

Pritz Harbor, White Oak Street.

Fors Wall took the steam locomotive early in the morning and arrived at the kingdom's largest and most important port. She had also booked tickets for her return trip by boat which was relatively inexpensive.

Taking in the smell of the sea, Fors saw many of the dockworkers who were in a hurry.

In the middle of each season, the port was swarming with temporary workers for relatively decent pay, and many poor people living in Backlund's East Borough would head southeast on foot and in groups, traveling a distance of more than 60 kilometers. This was the same thing they did when harvesting hops.

The roads are wider than Backlund's, and the air quality isn't bad, but it's relatively dirtier... Fors looked around and found the Fishermen Association in an old building.

Without much trouble, she met Dorian Gray in an office.

The gentleman was of medium build, with exaggerated arms. His hair was combed rather neatly, completely unlike most of the members of the association who had hairstyles that looked like bird nests.

He should also be an Abraham family member... After explaining the purpose of her visit, Fors passed Lawrence's will, along with the strange notebook and the diamond-like Beyonder characteristic.

Dorian received the items with a complicated expression before opening the will first.

After reading it carefully, he lifted his head and looked earnestly at Fors with his blue eyes.

"Your kindness and honor are praiseworthy. Ms. Wall, I shall always remember the help you provided Aulisa and Lawrence. "Can you accept my gratitude? I wish to invite you to lunch."

"No problem." Fors was still wondering how to pass the time before her ship sailed.

Dorian immediately arranged for her to wait in the next lounge, offering black tea, snacks, newspapers, and magazines.

Returning to the office, the gentleman opened a hidden cabinet with some misgivings and took out an item.

It was a pure crystal ball shining with a radiant light.

Chapter 408: A Bold Assumption

Dorian drew the curtains, cloaking the office with darkness before he sat down.

He held the crystal ball in his left hand while touching its top with his right palm. As he stroked the crystal ball back and forth, he kept chanting softly.

Gradually, the radiant points of light within the crystal ball began to shine brighter and brighter, becoming more and more obvious, as if the stars in the night sky were casting their reflections.

Often used to determine the direction of fate, the stars in the trajectory of one's life surfaced one after another, forming a three-dimensional astrolabe with many revelations from the spirit world that resembled symbols.

Dorian Gray finally stopped and studied it.

She wasn't lying... That really was the trajectory of the situation... She seems to be able to bring about changes to the Abraham family—optimistic changes... As the light from the crystal ball dimmed, Dorian stood up, having already made up his mind.

At lunchtime, in the Four-Winged Bird restaurant.

In front of Fors lay a filleted fried fish which had rosemary scattered over it. Its skin was crispy, its meat fresh, and it didn't have any fine bones. It was rather tasty, but the only problem was that the cook had an extremely warped sense of aesthetics.

He had deliberately kept the eyes of the fish bulging out of its head, and by plating the food, he made the fish look up, as though to express its indignation over its death.

Fors pushed the head down, cut off the tail, and covered the upturned eye.

At that moment, Dorian Gray began moving his fork and knife as he casually said, "Aulisa really liked mysticism and had done some research in this area. When you were packing her things, did you see any books, notes, or other items?"

“There were some notebooks and books,” Fors answered frankly. “As a result, I became a mysticism enthusiast, but unfortunately, I couldn’t understand some of the content at all.”

For example, the Sights in the Spirit World. Not only was it absurd, illogical, and messy, incapable of expressing ideas, even if I forced myself to read it and systematically calm my impatience, it was still difficult to remember its contents. I would forget it once I finished reading it, let alone understand it... Fors added inwardly.

Dorian nodded slightly and laughed.

“Then you can consult me. I’m also a mysticism enthusiast, quite a proficient one if I may add.”

“Really? That’s great!” Fors answered appropriately.

Seeing that she was really interested, Dorian immediately diverted the topic to mysticism. Sometimes he would bring up the spirit world, and sometimes he would talk about his Cogitation experience. Having been prepared before he even stepped into the restaurant, he had deliberately chosen a secluded and quiet spot. Hence, he didn’t need to fear that the customers around them would overhear their conversation.

At the end of the lunch, Dorian offered, “I didn’t know how to express my gratitude, but now I don’t have to worry about it anymore. Heh heh, although Lawrence had paid you, I don’t think that’s enough to match your kindness, goodheartedness, and honor.

“Ms. Wall, you can write to me and ask about any questions you have about mysticism. That’s the least I can do to express my gratitude.”

“That’s what I wish for.” Fors didn’t refuse.

From the exchange just now, she could clearly tell that Dorian Gray possessed rich, systematic mysticism knowledge. He was indeed worthy of being a member of the ancient Abraham family.

And this was also considered something she was lacking in. Although she had mastered quite a lot of knowledge about the Beyonder world, it all came from a few books and notebooks that didn’t go in-depth, as well as random information she had heard and experienced from the

various gatherings she attended. It wasn't comprehensive or systematic enough, and it just had too many shortcomings.

Upon hearing her reply, Dorian raised his cup and smiled.

"I hope that one day, we will also possess mysterious and extraordinary powers."

...

North Borough in Backlund. Saint Samuel Cathedral.

A group of men wearing black trench coats and red gloves entered an underground area. The leader was a man in his forties with soft facial features and long hair.

Wearing a pompous top hat, he carried a black cane which was inlaid with gold. He quietly followed the Nighthawk leading the way and entered a rather spacious room.

There were many bookshelves in the room, with various dossiers placed on them. A mesmerizing, beautiful woman wearing a black robe with blue eyeshadow and blush was leisurely sitting in a high back chair. She didn't get up to greet him. It was the former Spirit Medium, Daly.

"Soest, all the information you need is over there." Daly gestured with her chin at the table by the door.

The middle-aged man named Soest smiled and said, "Daly, why were you sent to guard this place? You should be tasked with more important matters."

"No, this is what I wanted. I need to settle down and read more information." Daly chuckled. "This is to ease my future progress. Humans are fragile creatures, and they need a certain amount of time to calm down. No one can always be in peak condition, enjoying the thrill and pleasure without any rest."

"...Your style really has never changed. Unfortunately, you've never given me the chance." Soest burst out laughing.

Daly shook her head seriously and said, "Obviously, you don't understand me. My current hobby has turned even more novel. If you

can turn yourself into a rotten corpse or expose your white bones, then I'll definitely be filled with interest in you."

She turned to look at the "Red Glove" behind Soest. "Leonard, why did you choose to join his team? This fellow is conceited, arrogant, and gutless. He keeps fantasizing that women would take the initiative to crawl into bed, waiting for him. To be honest, perhaps this is the unique trait of a Nightmare?" When she mentioned "Nightmare," Daly visibly paused.

Leonard helplessly said, "Ma'am Daly, this was the arrangement of His Excellency Cesimir."

"Is that so... I can see that you agree with my views on Soest," Daly concluded in a slightly husky voice.

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for an explanation.

Fortunately, Soul Assurer Soest didn't pay much attention to Daly's words. Walking over to the table filled with information, he picked up a dossier and flipped through it. Leonard and the others immediately surrounded him, imitating their leader.

After the sound of paper flipping went on for some time, Soest casually asked, "What's new in Backlund recently? Something you think is worth paying attention to."

Daly's eyes moved slightly. After thinking for a while, she said, "A few Beyonders who work with us have passed on news that many people are searching for an organization that believes in The Fool, and they have given the corresponding honorific name..."

After describing The Fool's honorific name in the Loen language, she chuckled.

"I seem to be witnessing the birth of an entirely new cult. Of course, it might be the incarnation of an old friend.

"What do you think, Soest?"

Soest considered the matter seriously before saying, "No, I've never heard of such an organization."

At that moment, Leonard looked up from the dossier he was reading and mused, “Could this have something to do with the two tarot rituals we’re investigating?

“The Fool is the first card in a deck of tarot cards, the most important Major Arcana card!”

Daly froze for a second, then she nodded thoughtfully.

“That’s an interesting idea.

“But there’s no evidence. It’s pure speculation, and it cannot even be considered a deduction,” Soest said, disapproval within his tone.

Leonard revealed a faint smile and said, “Emperor Roselle once said to make a bold hypothesis and then carefully back it up.”

...

Hillston Borough, Quelaag Club.

As soon as Klein entered the hall after leaving the Harvest Church, he saw the equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont, sitting in a secluded corner, seemingly pondering over something.

Noticing that lunch was still some time away, Klein went over and greeted him with a smile.

“Good afternoon, Talim. You seem to have encountered another problem?”

Talim snapped to his senses with a start and hurriedly shook his head.

“No, nothing.”

You seem to have done something that you have a guilty conscience about? Klein mumbled, sat down, and laughed.

“It’s a pity Aaron and Mike aren’t here, otherwise we’d be having another pleasant afternoon.” Talim smiled in response.

“They’re all busy and have very little free time.”

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he looked around and said, “Sherlock, there’s an important figure who is very interested in you

after hearing about your deeds. He would like to meet you. Would you be willing?

"Frankly speaking, this leaves me envious. It's a very rare opportunity."

Wait, what deeds did I do? Help Mrs. Mary catch her adulterous husband? Accompany Reporter Mike to a brothel? Even in my past few trips to East Borough, I didn't do anything impressive... At the very most, they'd know that I made a contribution to the serial murders and that I helped Dr. Aaron resolve his nightmare by providing him with counsel... Klein was confused.

After two seconds, he suddenly understood the reason.

The important figure must've asked Talim if he knew of an excellent detective, and he could only think of me, so he offered to embellish descriptions about me that sounded pretty impressive, such as the true person who cracked the case behind the serial murders, the person who noticed that Mrs. Mary's former husband and his mistress had attempted to siphon funds from the Coim Company. I was probably described as being effective and sharp, a great detective who struck swiftly and precisely... This is how you tout each other in business... Klein sighed.

He hesitated for a moment and said, "I'm sorry, Talim. But as a detective, I have my own principles, and that is to not get involved in matters involving important figures. On the stage of the higher-ups, what might be a sneeze-like friction among them might very well be an unbearable disaster for me.

"I won't paint a target on my back, so I won't see this important figure."

This was actually something Klein had decided upon before he became a detective.

He was prone to an investigation once he was involved with high society; therefore, before he became a Faceless, he didn't want to bear such risks.

"...You're very rational." Talim sighed and said, "The important figure has anticipated this reaction and believes that such a detective is even more trustworthy, so he wishes for you to take on a commission that wouldn't involve high society." "What kind of commission?" Klein asked.

Talim chuckled and said, "The Capim case which you and Mike were talking about last time. The important figure is very interested in the organization that uses tarot cards. He said that there has been more than one such case and wishes for you to find any relevant clues."

What? Getting me to investigate myself again? Klein nearly suspected that this was a deliberate test.

An organization that uses tarot cards to represent itself really is interesting, and I think so, but I don't want to sell myself out... Right, Capim's matter is clearly not that simple. He had a total of four Beyonders protecting him, so there must be a powerful faction behind him. What's the difference between investigating this case and being involved in high society strife? Well, this isn't something Sherlock Moriarty should know... Klein revealed a thoughtful expression, and while weighing his options, he said, "It's not easy to find a mysterious organization. Besides, it's very dangerous."

Talim seemed to have expected his answer and chuckled.

"Sherlock, there's no need for you to take risks. The important figure's intention is for you to pay more attention and to gather the relevant information or rumors. Here's 5 pounds in cash, money for your activities. Even if you don't receive any valuable information, the money is yours. And once you gather any useful clues, he'll pay you per lead and reimburse you for your expenses throughout the process."

Such good conditions? That important figure has put a lot of his attention on this matter... Does he have connections with the forces behind Capim, or does he wish to find the mysterious organization that uses tarot cards as a code name to help him? Reimburse... It's been a long time since I've heard someone promise me something like this... Since he's already gone so far by promising me such perks, it would appear very suspicious if a private detective were to refuse the commission... Furthermore, the matter of investigating myself should clearly be left to me... Klein hesitated for a few seconds and said, "Alright. I'll do my best."

He didn't stand on ceremony, and he accepted the five onepound notes that Talim handed him, intending to provide a vague clue every week or two.

Isn't the Aurora Order looking for The Fool? The Fool is obviously part of a tarot card! I hope that important figure will pursue this path

all the way and get rid of Mr. A... A thought began to form in Klein's mind.

...

Under Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Soul Assurer Soest assembled his team together to discuss their subsequent actions.

He looked at the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard Mitchell and asked, half-asking and half-evaluating, "If I were to relegate this matter to you, how do you plan on investigating the two cases related to the tarot ritual?"

Leonard lifted his hand to comb his hair, smiled, and said, "First, I would go according to my train of thought from before. I would do a reverse search for the people or organizations seeking The Fool's believers. They might know something. Second, I would reinvestigate the first two cases and place all the people involved in a name list, regardless of if they were suspects or not! Then, I'll use the powers of a Nightmare to inquire and eliminate them one by one. The devil might be in the details, hidden in the person who's most improbable."

Soest let out a chuckle.

"I've read through the dossiers. These two cases involve a lot of people, each living in different places. Wanting to re-examine them is quite difficult, and some of them are already Beyonders who are secretly active beneath the surface. They know how to hide themselves very well, and we have no way of knowing where they are. If we were to perform an investigation according to your idea, then what we need wouldn't be a small team. The Church would have to inject at least five more Sequence 7 or above Nighthawks and the corresponding support personnel."

"The case we are in charge of is focused on the devil-summoning case," another Red Glove reminded Leonard.

Leonard didn't seem angry as he let out a soft laugh.

“I know. I’m only providing my point of view. As for whether or not it is used, or the extent to which it will be used will be decided by Captain Soest.”

He paused for a moment and revealed a puzzled expression.

“I don’t understand why the two cases related to the tarot rituals didn’t have a high priority. The former involved an evil god’s attempted descent, countless times more serious than a mere devil summoning.”

Soest picked up his coffee and took a sip before leisurely answering, “The Nighthawks have limited manpower. All cases require a certain priority level. Up to now, the secret organization represented by tarot cards hasn’t expressed any obvious malice towards us. Their actions, to a certain extent, have helped us. For example, they foiled the descent of the True Creator, as well as letting us know that the human trafficker, Capim, isn’t a simple person. There must be some big secret underlying the matter.” After saying that, he smiled and said, “Perhaps they can help us discover even more unsavory matters.

“Of course, the necessary investigations must be carried out. No one can guarantee that a secret organization will not end up being our enemy in the future.”

“I see, Captain Soest. Let’s focus on the devil summoning case,” Leonard said earnestly.

...

In a Backlund winter that was inseparable from fireplaces and fog, time flew by amidst these cold and gray sensations.

In the blink of an eye, there was only half a month left until the new year.

Klein extinguished the charcoal in the fireplace and put on a double-breasted frock coat over his dark red woolen vest.

Nearly three weeks ago, Leppard finally received the bike patent and began looking for suitable second-round investors. Steam car mogul, Framis Cage, ended up showing some interest in this.

After several meetings, the three parties agreed to conclude their final negotiations today.

During the past month or so, Klein led an uneventful life. Through his investigations, he slowly digested the potion by strictly following the principles. Now, he was just short of a relatively bigger performance that he needed to initiate to completely digest it.

If there are no urgent matters, I can avoid taking risks. It would take about another... As his mind wandered, Klein removed the half top hat from the coat rack and smoothed the folds with a brush and handkerchief, removing the dust.

The badge left behind by Lanevus indicated a 4th January gathering. He had no strong intentions on attending it.

During this time, the Tarot Club continued being held on a weekly basis. Klein obtained a few pages of Roselle's early diary entries, allowing him to witness how he went from a weakling, who only knew how to dream without taking actual action, to becoming a playboy who actively hunted.

Apart from this, he gained almost nothing. Although the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic was handed over to The Hanged Man for sale via The World, a sale involving more than a thousand pounds was obviously not easy to close. The Werewolf's unique trait of being cursed also caused many interested parties to shrink back from it.

However, a few days ago at a Tarot Gathering, The Hanged Man told The World that he had contacted an Artisan from the Church of the God of Steam, and the other party was clearly interested.

Let's hope the deal with be closed this week... There are still no clues to the Wind-blessed formula which Mr. Hanged Man wants... Klein packed his personal belongs, picked up his cane, wore his hat, and walked out the door. The Wind-blessed potion formula was a Sequence 6 formula. It wasn't that easy to encounter one. The Hanged Man, Alger, had waited for more than a month without receiving any good news.

Justice Audrey, after undergoing a long period of observation and testing, was finally accepted by the Psychology Alchemists. She reported to Mr. Fool that she should be officially joining the secret organization this week, hoping to be blessed ahead of time to prevent any accidents from happening. For this, she was prepared to plunder at least ten pages of Roselle's diary entries from the Psychology Alchemists for Mr. Fool without any compensation.

As for the dragon specimen in Duke Negan's treasury, she had already confirmed that it was a Thousand-faced Hunter. However, it was purely a sample that was without the corresponding Beyonder characteristic or flowing blood.

The 2,000 pounds she owed Mr. Fool's Blessed wouldn't be repaid until February or March of next year. This was because, although she would officially come of age at the New Year's Ball and be able to take charge of a portion of her fortune, she would still be under the supervision of her parents and wouldn't be able to sell them at will. Furthermore, she was still short of Viscount Glaint's final payment, so she needed ample time to raise the money in secret.

The Magician Fors, with the help of The Hanged Man, finally obtained the blood of a Deep Sea Marlin. She paid him 320 pounds for it, which reduced her savings to 120 pounds.

In order to make up for her loss and for the stomach pouch of a Spirit Eater, she began to furiously rush to write her new book which quickly took shape. It told a story about adventure, love, traveling, storms, pirates, and many other elements fused into a whole.

Her and Dorian Gray's correspondence never stopped, and the other party had recently announced that they would be coming to Backlund to pay their respects to Aulisa, Laubero, and Lawrence.

The Sun Derrick, who was acting normally as suggested by The Hanged Man, continued his daily patrols, amassed merit points, and didn't attempt any rituals.

At every Tarot Gathering, he would skillfully pretend to be asleep, and he didn't reveal any problems for the time being. Usually, he would

occasionally take a nap to prevent any regularities from being detected which would put him under suspicion.

According to him, Shepherd Elder Lovia, didn't leave the bottom of the spire seven days later and was still locked in there for unknown reasons.

With the Aurora Order's Mr. A searching for the followers and Blessed of The Fool, they failed to receive any valuable clues with Klein's deliberate attempt to keep a low profile. And the Beyonders, who knew the honorific name of The Fool all understood that they should never chant such words carelessly. Unless they were in dire straits, and they definitely didn't have the courage to pray to an existence that was suspected of being an evil god.

Emlyn mentioned the last time that he had some clues for the corresponding ingredients and that he might be able to confirm it soon, but the problem is that I'm lacking the money now... With a silent grunt, Klein took his cane and walked to Lawyer Jurgen's door.

When the doorbell rang, he took the initiative and instinctively took two steps back.

Not long after, the door opened and old Mrs. Doris cheerfully opened her arms to give Klein a warm hug.

"Oh, the doctor you introduced last time was wonderful! My body hasn't been this healthy for almost ten years!" Doris, seeing that the detective was standing far away, could only fold her arms and express her delight and feelings in words.

Klein said in an amused and exasperated tone, "Mrs. Doris, you've already told me this for the ninth time."

He saw Brody, the black cat, sitting on top of the coat rack. Although it looked precarious, he was able to maintain his balance.

I can do that as well... Klein made a self-evaluation.

"Is that so?" Old Mrs. Doris asked, perplexed.

She immediately tossed the question to the back of her mind and said with a smile, “Are you here for Jurgen?” Klein immediately revealed a smile.

“Yes.”

Matters involving negotiations needed the help of a professional lawyer.

Chapter 410: Framis Cage

St. George Borough, Sird Street.

As soon as Klein and Jurgen alighted from the carriage, they saw a massive object parked in front of Inventor Leppard's door.

It was iron-black in color, with a dozen wheels in three groups, the top of which towered like a ship's chimney, and smoke was emitted from it.

It was a steam car that Klein had seen in magazines and on the streets, often described by the public as an ironclad warship with a rather exaggerated body.

If the streets that hadn't been built or rebuilt in the last twenty or thirty years, then it would've filled the roads and left no room for horse carriages. Therefore, transportation vehicle such as this could only be seen in certain areas and places.

At this moment, the heavy glass window and door of the car opened, and two figures stepped out.

One of them was the steam car mogul, Framis Cage, whom Klein had met before. A quarter of his blood was of the Feysac Empire, and he had pale blue eyes and a tall, but bulging build. He had a pipe in his mouth.

The person beside him was wearing a heavy black coat with a gray scarf wrapped around his neck. His features were unremarkable. He looked common with his black hair and brown eyes; yet, he exuded an inexplicable sense of familiarity. "Hi, Detective Moriarty, you're really punctual. This is my lawyer and partner, Pacheco Dwayne."

While they conversed, two burly men got out of the steampowered car. They were obviously Framis's bodyguards.

How unprofessional? Shouldn't they come down first and then open the door for their boss? Klein grunted, smiled in greeting, and introduced his lawyer, Jurgen.

While he was waiting for Leppard to open the door, he casually chatted with him.

“Mr. Cage, is this kind of steam-powered vehicle popular? Do a lot of people like it?”

Framis Cage laughed.

“Those who think that they’re decent say that it’s too barbaric and crude, and ordinary people can’t afford it. Only I, an enthusiast of such machinery and steam, would be willing to buy it.”

“It’s mainly because many streets are too narrow,” Klein said in consolation.

Framis Cage was the investor he found, and he had little to do with Leppard.

When he was playing cards at the Quelaag Club, he had deliberately mentioned it, and the equestrian teacher, Talim, immediately mentioned that Framis liked similar inventions, offering to introduce them to each other.

This made Klein sigh with emotion. *The club really was a great place to develop connections, and the members who joined it were never really interested in the free food, drinks, and activity venues.*

“Haha, this is indeed one of the reasons. As the population increases and the cities grow larger, the horse carriage will definitely be eliminated. It’s just too slow. What this world is pursuing now is efficiency!” Framis said confidently.

He then revealed a smile.

“Also, I’ve already obtained an order from the military. They want me to make some improvements, just like it was mentioned in Roselle’s manuscript; increase the armor’s bulletproof plating, cover the tracks so that it can drive on a simple road. In addition, add a thick cannon barrel, and then this will be a brand-new weapon.”

Roselle’s manuscript... Klein sighed silently and for a moment he didn’t know what to say until, finally, Leppard opened the door.

In the discussion that followed, the main people talking were Jurgen and Pacheco. The two lawyers would argue with each other and discuss the terms with their employers, while the completely unprepared

Inventor Leppard sat there in a daze. Only when asked would he give his opinion.

Finally, the three parties agreed that Framis would invest a thousand pounds to take 20% of the shares, and the shares of Klein and Leppard would fall by an equal ratio, 28% and 52%.

At the same time, Framis agreed to buy a further 18% of Klein's shares at a premium, and this cost him a thousand pounds after taxes.

Similarly, he would buy a 9% stake in the company at a post-tax price for 500 pounds.

As a result of this deal, Framis became the largest shareholder in the newly established Backlund Bike Company, with a 47% share. He became responsible for the subsequent industrialization and marketing, while the company would be funded with the 1,000 pounds he invested as the initial capital.

Leppard was the second largest shareholder, with 43% of the shares. His job was to help in the setting up of the assembly line for mass production.

Mr. Klein, who only had the remaining 10% of the shares, became a purely financial investor.

And the 1,000 pounds he earned from selling his shares had sent his personal wealth skyrocketing to 2,235 pounds, almost enough for him to buy a main ingredient for a Faceless potion. As a private detective, he still continued accepting commissions in the past month or so, so his daily expenses didn't drain his savings.

I still have to pay 50 pounds to Lawyer Jurgen, leaving me with 2,185 pounds... I'll have to thank Talim when I see him... A thought flashed through Klein's mind. He signed and stamped the contract. Then, he stood up and shook hands with Framis and Leppard.

"I hope for a pleasant partnership."

Framis took out his golden pocket watch and looked at it before chuckling.

“Normally, we should have lunch together to celebrate the closing of a deal, but there’s an important person waiting for me. I’m really sorry, but there will still be a lot of opportunities in the future.”

An important figure, another one.... The one behind Talim? The one that I claimed reimbursement from using fake information that points to the Aurora Order? Klein suddenly felt a little guilty. He hurriedly smiled and said that he didn’t mind.

After exiting the house and getting into a carriage, Jurgen suddenly frowned slightly.

“Sherlock, you agreed too readily.”

“Why do you say that?” Klein asked curiously.

He didn’t even know what Jurgen was talking about.

Jurgen said rather seriously, “When we were talking about the transfer of shares.

“Based on your description, and on Framis’s performance, I can imagine a bright market prospect for bikes. Although it’s just an invention at the moment, deflating the overall valuation, you should’ve kept more shares even though 5,000 pounds is a good price. That way you can get better returns in the future.

“I thought you were only going to sell 8% and have the confidence to haggle for 500 pounds, but you actually agreed to 18%. Even if it were only 500 pounds, you would have made a severalfold return on the investment. You shouldn’t have been in such a hurry.”

Because I’m in need of money... However, I did agree very readily without any hesitation. It was a huge transaction, so that does seem rather abnormal for me... As Klein thought back to the scene from before, he began to have some doubts deep down.

Was I unconsciously influenced by Framis or that Lawyer Pacheco? One of them is a Beyonder? Fortunately, the price was fairly reasonable... As he pondered over the matter, Klein said to Jurgen who was waiting for an answer, “The new year is coming soon...”

He had no idea how to explain it, so he randomly chose an opening.

If the other party was a smart person, then they would go along with the opening and perfect the explanation with their own reasoning. There was no need for Klein to describe it any further.

Of course, this was a move aimed at smart people. Ordinary people would end up pressing, “so” or “what exactly happened.”

Lawyer Jurgen was obviously a smart man. Noticing Klein’s brief silence, he nodded and said, “I understand.

What do you understand? I haven’t even thought of what to say... Klein pointed to the steam metro station in front of them and said, “I’m getting off here. I need to meet an informant.”

...

As the steam-powered vehicle roared forward, Framis, who was sitting in the front row, wound down the window and blew out a ring of smoke. He said to the inconspicuous Lawyer Pacheco, “Did you use your powers just now?”

“It was passively triggered,” Pacheco said with a smile. “My powers aren’t suitable for such situations. I prefer to face government or enterprise employees.” Framis nodded slightly.

“I just wanted to remind you.

“There’s no need to use your powers in such situations. Do not let this affect what matters most.”

“I understand,” Pacheco replied in a low voice.

...

East Borough, in a cheap coffee shop.

When Klein arrived, Old Kohler was already waiting for him.

He removed his scarf, took off his hat, sat down across him, fished out a stack of one-soli notes, and handed it to him.

“For next week’s expenses and a bonus for the information you provided me the last time. That’s a total of one pound.”

He was recently very generous with giving bonuses since he had already found a person to claim them from.

Old Kohler, whose face was clearly ruddier than before, received the cash, feeling a little embarrassed.

“The information I gave you previously didn’t seem to be that important...”

“No, the importance depends on who wields it. There are a lot of things that you might find trivial, but it’s how other people earn their money,” Klein explained with a laugh. “What happened this week?”

Old Kohler took the stack of bills and stuffed it into his pocket. He said thoughtfully, “Just like before, many people are still looking for the believers of The Fool. Haha, how could anyone believe in The Fool? That isn’t a good name.”

... The corners of Klein’s mouth slightly twitched.

“Are they making progress?”

The Aurora Order is really persistent... Klein thought helplessly.

“No, there’s no such person.” Old Kohler shook his head and then said, “There are a few people organizing strikes recently. They came to me a few times, claiming that they will be fighting for reasonable working hours and salaries.”

It’s a very normal thing in this era, but it can lead to quite serious consequences... Klein thoughtfully said, “Pay attention to the organizers of this matter. But don’t be too anxious. Safety first.”

“Alright.” Old Kohler cleared his throat and said, “There have been a lot of gangsters and bounty hunters looking for a person these days. I don’t know why, but I believe someone has offered a bounty.”

“Who are they looking for?” Feeling the cold, Klein took a sip of his coffee.

The warm liquid ran down his esophagus and warmed his belly.

Old Kohler thought for a moment and said, “A man named Azik Eggers.”

Azik Eggers... Azik Eggers? Klein looked up from his coffee cup and stared straight at Old Kohler, who was sitting across him.

Isn't that Mr. Azik's full name? Why would someone suddenly offer a bounty for him? Ince Zangwill? Relying on his Clown powers, Klein feigned indifference as he asked, "Did it say what kind of person he was?"

Old Kohler recalled and said, "He seems to be of Balam lineage and was once a university lecturer."

Seems to be of Balam lineage... a university lecturer... It really is Mr. Azik, not someone sharing the same name... Using the information provided by Old Kohler, Klein basically confirmed that the person the bounty was aimed at was the suspected descendant of Death, Azik.

Here lies the problem. Who or what organization is looking for Mr. Azik?

The Numinous Episcopate whose ultimate goal is to revive Death? Ince Zangwill who likes to play the mastermind behind the scenes?

It's unlikely to be the latter. Ince Zangwill has Sealed Artifact 0-08, which allows a target to act according to his descriptions, and through a series of coincidences, he can achieve his desired objective. There's no need at all for him to use the gangs and bounty hunters to find Mr. Azik...

Wait, what if this is actually an arrangement by Sealed Artifact 0-08? Realizing that he's now the target of Mr. Azik but lacks the confidence to clinch victory in battle, Ince Zangwill is using 0-08 to instigate conflict between Mr. Azik and some particular faction, hoping to eliminate his enemy indirectly. And this reward was issued by that faction... It's very possible!

However, I can't rule out the Numinous Episcopate. To get revenge, Mr. Azik might have made contact with them. However, there were major differences between the two parties regarding the resurrection of Death, which eventually led to a falling out...

Klein instantly thought of two possibilities and the corresponding reasons.

He took a sip of his coffee and said to Old Kohler, "Help me find out who issued this bounty and its exact price. If it's appropriate, I'll take note of it while I'm at it."

"No problem." Old Kohler didn't feel that anything was amiss with Klein's request.

From a certain perspective, there were no essential differences between a private detective and a bounty hunter. The only difference was that the former would involve themselves in trivial matters such as catching adulterers in the act, finding cats, and helping others walk dogs, while they tended to use the powers of deduction more than brute force.

When Old Kohler finished describing what he had seen and heard, Klein briefly taught him some of the tricks of leading a conversation based on the Nighthawks' curriculum, as well as the contingency plans for specific scenarios.

"It's time for me to go to the docks. Thank you, Detective Moriarty, for allowing me to lead a good life once again!" Old Kohler picked up the old, worn-out hat on the table and thanked him sincerely.

The detective, in his view, not only provided him with a wellpaid job, but he also taught him many useful things. Even if the detective no longer needed him as an informant, the skills he learned would allow him to barely survive in East Borough, especially since he was growing older and less capable of laborious work.

A good life? In my opinion, what you have now is the basics of what a person should have... After watching Old Kohler walk out the cheap coffee house, Klein sat there in a daze.

This was the first time that he had heard a friend's name from someone else since his arrival in Backlund, and it was also the first time that he might have grasped Ince Zangwill's whereabouts!

For the past three months, Klein's main goal had been to digest the potion and enhance himself, especially after he killed Lanevus.

That was because he knew very well that he and Ince Zangwill, who was most likely a High-Sequence Beyonder, had an unbridgeable gap. He couldn't be impatient for revenge, especially when it came to the chilling Sealed Artifact 0-08. He didn't even have the intention to approach and investigate it.

Scenes from the Blackthorn Security Company in Tingen replayed themselves in Klein's mind, and those bright polished shoes clearly appeared before his eyes.

Raising his head and slowly letting out a breath, Klein took his scarf and hat and walked out of the cheap coffee shop.

...

Hillston Borough, outside a rather old building.

Klein got off the carriage, pressed his hat, and went straight to the door.

It was Isengard Stanton's house.

The great detective had written to Klein a few days ago, inviting him to come over to discuss a murder case.

Mr. Klein, who has been busy with the financing of the bike project, tactfully replied that he had no time to spare as a form of rejection. To his surprise, Isengard Stanton didn't seem to mind and said that the case had hit a brick wall, making it unlikely that there would be any breakthroughs anytime soon. He was very willing to wait for Detective Sherlock Moriarty's visit and expressed how he looked forward to an exchange that ignited sparks of wisdom.

As such, Klein could only first divine a suitable date for the visit, picking the closest date after the negotiations, which happened to be this afternoon. With that, he wrote back and fixed an appointment.

Ding dong, ding dong.

Klein rang the bell twice and stepped back to wait.

More than ten seconds later, the door creaked open, and the assistant of the great detective, Isengard, said with a smile, "Good afternoon, Detective Moriarty. Mr. Stanton is waiting for you in the activity room. Would you like coffee or tea?"

The assistant was thin and wore gold-rimmed glasses. He looked both refined and professional.

Klein looked up at him and said, "Tea. Be sparing on the lemon slices."

"No problem." The assistant led Klein into the living room, pointed to the activity room and said, "Sorry, our servants are only temporary, and they just happened to be on their day off today, so I can only trouble you to go over alone."

Klein nodded and walked towards the activity room on the first floor.

As he lifted his hand to knock on the door, he suddenly felt that something was amiss.

I arranged a visit with Mr. Stanton a few days in advance. Why would I chance upon the temporary servants' day off?

Klein's eyes narrowed, and he pulled out a copper penny.

At this moment, the door to the activity room opened due to the knock, producing a tiny crack.

In the blink of an eye, as if some seal was lifted, the strong smell of fresh blood poured out and overwhelmed Klein's nose.

From what he could see, the reclining chair in the activity room was overturned and was stained with dark red blood. A book lay beside it, its cover facing up.

With just that one glance, Klein felt as if he was seeing a murder scene.

The name of the book caught his eye: "The Devil's Legend of Sivellaus Borough."

Devil... Klein was about to make a move when a strong wind suddenly blew in the activity room, quickly pulling the door back.

Creak!

Klein clearly saw the entire interior of the activity room.

The charcoal in the fireplace had long since burned out, and there was no longer any red embers glowing; the coffee table, the sofa, the chairs, the cupboard, and other items had either fallen or shattered. It appeared as if he witnessed an intense battle.

There was a lot of blood on the carpet and walls, and a lot of scorch marks, but there was no sign of a body at the scene, not even a stump limb.

Something happened to Detective Stanton? Klein suddenly took a step back, intending to first leave the place.

However, almost at the same time, he felt someone lock onto him.

Someone was staring at him with a cold and merciless gaze from an unknown location!

The moment he made a mistake in his response, he would immediately be met with a fatal blow!

How can this be a suitable day to visit Isengard Stanton? Was my interpretation of the revelation wrong? Klein didn't dare to act rashly.

However, he was neither too nervous or flustered. Having experienced many battles and "performances," he knew that he needed to stay calm during such moments.

Tap, tap, tap. Isengard Stanton's assistant walked over with a tray.

On the tray was a tin teapot and two white porcelain cups.

The assistant froze in place when he saw the scene in the activity room.

He looked at Klein, his face suddenly filled with fear as he stuttered, "You... killed... Mr... Stanton..."

Every time he said a word, a piece of flesh fell from his face as blood gushed out.

After he finished speaking, his body was torn to shreds, turning into a dismembered corpse. It was as if he had always been in that state, with everything preceding this being him in a state where he was stitched up.

Clang! Crack! The tin pot and white porcelain cup hit the ground at the same time, rolling or splashing, and the tea water quickly soaked the area.

Klein didn't move as he stood there watching everything that had happened. This was because he still felt like he was being watched.

The person who had caused this series of events appeared to be waiting for him to make a move before leaping onto his back and snapping his neck.

After an unknown period of time, in a silent and eerie stalemate, Klein saw the door to Isengard Stanton's house open up as a group of policemen in black and white checkered uniforms stormed in.

When they found the nauseating and dismembered corpses on the floor, they drew their revolvers and pointed them at Klein who stood at the doorway of the activity room.

Despite facing the black muzzles of the guns, Klein relaxed.

The wordless gaze that seemed to hold a gun to the back of his head disappeared at that instant!

Klein raised his hands and laughed helplessly.

“I won’t say anything until I see my lawyer.”

...

Backlund’s Chissak Police Station.

Chained to a water pipe, Klein met Lawyer Jurgen once again.

“I will accompany you during the interrogation.” There was nothing unusual about Jurgen’s expression, as though Detective Moriarty belonged here.

Klein sighed and said, “What a tragedy. I should be considering what I will be eating tonight, not talking to a stone-faced police officer.”

The thing he was most thankful for today was that due to the Aurora Order’s investigation and the attention of the Rose School of Thought’s High-Sequence Beyonder, he didn’t bring any Beyonder items with him. His only revolver was easily concealed from the body search using a magic-like performance.

When he entered the interrogation room, he recounted the letter he received from Isengard Stanton about discussing a case without the police officer’s questioning.

“Later, we’ll go to your house with Mr. Jurgen to retrieve these letters. I hope they’re still there.” The officer in charge of the interrogation switched gears and asked, “How did you get to know Detective Isengard Stanton?”

Klein replied without hesitation, “Because of that serial murder case...”

At this point, he suddenly froze for a moment.

It reminded him of something. He had always suspected that there was a master behind the Devil dog, the person who had harrumphed when the Devil dog was killed.

Yes, the book Stanton was reading before the attack was "The Devil's Legend of Sivellaus Borough"... Could it be that the owner of the Devil dog is beginning to take revenge after lying low all this time? And Detective Stanton was the person in the police records who provided the main clues or ideas. Furthermore, he was the one who received the bounty reward! Klein quickly had a theory.

When he thought about the possibility that the Devil dog's owner was involved, Klein changed his strategy and decided to recount his involvement with Isengard Stanton in great detail.

In addition, he took the initiative to mention Isengard Stanton's assembly of a team of detectives to investigate the serial murder and the portion of the bounty that they successfully obtained.

"In that commission, although I only gave some ideas, well—in the jargon of the private detective industry, I provided suggestions, but it was still considered the greatest contribution by Mr. Stanton, so I received the bulk of the bounty," Klein concluded.

The two officers in charge of the interrogation jotted down the information and asked if anyone could prove it. Klein gave them the names and addresses of Stuart, Kaslana, and the other private detectives.

"Very good, Mr. Moriarty. Your answer is detailed enough." A police officer stopped writing and asked, "How long did you spend in Isengard Stanton's home today? I mean, from the time you entered to the time we found you."

Klein thought for a moment and, without consulting Lawyer Jurgen, directly replied, "About two to three minutes." What he said was based on what he truly felt.

Another police officer raised his eyebrows and said, "Many residents nearby were able to confirm that you entered Isengard Stanton's house around 2:10 p.m. We arrived at the scene at 2:28 p.m., which is to say, you were in the house for about eighteen minutes, not two or three minutes!

"What exactly were you doing during this lengthy period of time? Why didn't you leave and call the police?"

Eighteen minutes passed? Klein frowned suddenly.

He felt that the stalemate he had with the existence which silently watched him lasted for slightly more than a minute. How did it take a full eighteen minutes?

Was it the strange feeling of being watched that confused my grasp of time, or was it something else? Is it the Beyonder powers of the other party? If it really was the owner of the Devil dog, he would at least be at Sequence 6, with a high probability of being Sequence 5... While Klein pondered, Jurgen leaned forward, ready to accuse the police of being posing leading questions.

That was not a very good reason, but he simply wanted to use this method to interrupt the pace of the interrogation and delay the unfavorable question for his client.

At this moment, Klein raised his hand to rub his forehead.

"What I just said was the truth. Based on what I felt, only two or three minutes had passed after I entered Detective Isengard Stanton's house."

Upon saying that, he emphasized, "Yes, based on what I felt."

The two officers exchanged looks before writing the statement down.

After a moment of silence, the officer who had asked the question said, "During those eighteen minutes, a servant who came back from outside the house rang the doorbell, but no one answered, so he looked in through the oriel window and saw the floor full of corpses and that you were standing in the doorway of the activity room.

"He was terrified, running to the police station like a madman, and many passers-by and some residents had confirmed that."

Klein ignored the look in Lawyer Jurgen's eyes and shook his head.

"I didn't hear the doorbell."

The two officers exchanged looks again, but they made no comment. All they did was jot down what was said.

They asked questions about other details, and Klein, who had done nothing and was free from guilt, answered every question truthfully.

At the end, he couldn't help but ask, "Did you find Detective Isengard Stanton? It didn't seem like the activity room had a corpse. He's likely to be still alive, right..."

A police officer used a pen to tap on the table and said, "That's one of the things we're wondering about. Only the activity room in the house had signs of fighting, and the windows were closed, and they hadn't been opened for days. As you know, it's very normal to do so during Backlund's autumn and winter seasons.

"The attacker and Mr. Isengard Stanton left the room in a strange way, and we found no trace of him anywhere else in the house or in the neighborhood, not even blood."

Without waiting for Klein to speak, he questioned before answering his own question, "You definitely wish to mention the activity room's door and the door to the house, but many people have confirmed that there was no pursuit nearby, nor was there anyone taken hostage or a corpse being moved away."

Maybe it really happened in the middle of the night? Maybe they were able to go through walls? Klein silently offered other possibilities in his mind, and he silently prayed.

May the Goddess bless Detective Isengard Stanton and that he escaped the disaster—the Evernight Goddess was the Empress of Disaster and Horror.

When the interrogation was over, Klein was remanded in a small room, and the police sent someone to pick up the letter as evidence with Lawyer Jurgen at 15 Minsk Street.

It wasn't until the evening that Klein was finally admitted bail, posting a sum of fifty pounds.

"It's much more expensive than the last time. It's difficult for the average private detective to produce that much cash in a short period of time." After leaving the Chissak Police Station, Klein pulled up the collar of his tweed coat and complained to Jurgen.

Jurgen still wore a professional and staid expression.

“The situation was favorable towards you the last time, but this time, much of the evidence points to you.”

He stopped a rental carriage, turned his head to the side, and looked at Klein.

“Sherlock, I’m your lawyer. Before you answer the policeman’s questions, it’s best that you communicate with me, even if it’s just sending me a look.

“Do not speak carelessly even if you feel that there are no problems. Ordinary people who haven’t been trained will easily say things that trip them up.”

This... I’m used to fabricating my own stories and solving my own problems... Klein recalled what had just happened and gave a hollow laugh.

“Okay, I will keep that in mind.”

Without another word, Jurgen boarded the carriage.

Klein sat down across him and thought about Detective Isengard Stanton’s attack.

As he was thinking, he suddenly heard the rumbling sound of his stomach.

It’s already past my normal dinner time... Klein took out his gold pocket watch and opened it.

He didn’t want to waste any more energy preparing food, so he began to think about which restaurant was worth looking forward to.

At that moment, Jurgen raised his eyelids and said, “I’ve asked my grandmother to prepare dinner for three.”

“How can I impose on you?” Klein was startled for a moment before he laughed. “Mrs. Doris’s cooking skills are always something to look forward to.”

...

By the time they got back to Minsk Street in Cherwood Borough, the sky was completely dark and the street lamps were even brighter than the indistinct red moon in the sky.

After having dinner at the Jurgen's house and having fun with the cat, Klein strolled back to Unit 15 in the cold, damp air.

He habitually rummaged through the letterbox and pulled out a copy of the Backlund Evening News that had just arrived.

Klein opened the door with the newspaper in hand and just as he put the cane away, he realized something was wrong.

His spiritual intuition as a Seer told him that a stranger had entered his house!

Was it the police who came to collect the evidence? Klein looked around warily and suddenly saw a letter on the coffee table.

There should have only been newspapers sitting there!

Klein entered the living room warily, in preparation for an attack. He moved closer to the coffee table, and during the entire process, the surroundings were completely silent without the slightest abnormality.

Glancing down at the letter, Klein first took out a pair of black gloves and wore them before opening the letter.

There was a thin piece of paper inside the envelope. After unfolding it, a dark red color was immediately reflected in Klein's eyes, and the faint smell of blood lingered around his nose.

Words were written on the piece of paper with coagulated blood: "All of you will die!"

This... Is it really the owner of the Devil dog? Is he taking revenge on the people who caused his subordinate's death? This is truly a case of bullying the weak and fearing the strong. Why not directly find the Nighthawks responsible for the clean-up operation? Klein's heart tightened, and many thoughts flashed through his mind.

But he quickly dismissed his complaint. It was very normal to exact vengeance on the person that one could handle. Just like his past few

months in Backlund, he had never thought of finding Ince Zangwill, but he never gave up his pursuit of Lanevus.

After looking around again, Klein gradually found that this matter was a little confusing.

Isn't he afraid of being caught by the official Beyonders by using such an ostentatious method to exact revenge? Is this the "acting" requirement for his potion?

Or, rather, because Detective Isengard Stanton escaped, he knows that he can't get rid of his targets in secret, so he can only switch his methods. But what's the reason behind this method?

Also, when I was at Detective Stanton's house, he was clearly watching me. Why didn't he make a move? Was he apprehensive towards an ordinary private detective like me?

No, impossible... Does he know that I'm a Beyonder? Possible. Due to the side effect of me getting lost due to the Master Key, I had met with the Devil dog. It saw my body and how I looked like. Although I was disguised, I can't be certain that a Devil can see through it...

Perhaps, after that incident, it was able to present the scene to its owner in some way...

However, at that time, I couldn't even defeat the Devil dog, so I could only run away pathetically. What is there to be afraid of? Unless he's worried about something else, such as the injured Isengard Stanton who might be hiding nearby?

Did he write to me very openly, thinking that I, a wild Beyonder, wouldn't dare to seek help from the officials?

With his head filled with questions, Klein inspected the house and walked all the way to the second floor.

When he opened the bedroom door, another letter came into view.

The letter lay quietly on the desk, as though it had been waiting for him for a very long time.

Klein opened the letter and saw a line of dark red words that were drawn: "You're next."

Next... How arrogant... Klein couldn't help but sigh.

At this moment, he suddenly had a thought. He raised his head and looked outside the window.

Across him were a few two-story houses with their lights on.

The glow of the street lamps fell on their outer walls, forming a crisscrossing zone.

All of a sudden, the shadows in the areas squirmed and twisted, forming a black shadow in a tailcoat.

The shadow raised its right hand, gesturing in the shape of a gun, and pointed it at Klein.

Then, it retracted its arm and blew at the "gun's muzzle."

Immediately after, it silently fell back, transforming into countless disconnected shadows.

Chapter 413: Visitors

Inside the Rice Police Station which was in charge of Minsk Street and the surrounding district.

Klein shook hands with the officer who escorted him out.

"This threatening letter must've had something to do with the previous serial murders. The organizer of the detective team, the great detective, Mr. Isengard Stanton, has already been attacked this afternoon!

"Please take it seriously."

The police officer retracted his hand and said, "Don't worry, Mr. Moriarty. We definitely won't ignore your suggestion and immediately report it to the higher-ups."

"Thank you so much." Klein put on his hat and walked out the door.

After seeing the two threatening letters and the provocation from the suspected Devil dog's master, Klein didn't hesitate to bring the evidence to the nearest police station to report the case.

He secretly hoped that the matter would be transferred to the Mandated Punishers or the Machinery Hivemind Team as quickly as possible so that he could be placed under the protection of official Beyonders.

Although he no longer had any reason to keep his identity as a detective, being fully capable of giving up his residence at 15 Minsk Street and switching to another residence and identity, he suspected that this might have been the purpose of the author of that threatening letter.

Using the fear of wild Beyonders being exposed, the perpetrator was forcing him to flee under the cover of the night. Then, during this process, he could seize the opportunity to launch an attack.

Actually, it's quite a suitable time to attack me while I was heading over to the police station to report the incident... It's the same as when I was at home... That fellow has other plans... Confused and wary, Klein returned to Minsk Street.

As soon as he got out of the carriage, he saw a figure loitering in front of his house with the help of the street lamps amid the drizzle.

Klein's heart skipped a beat, but he immediately relaxed as he recognized the visitor.

It was Stuart, a slim private detective with a medium build, who adored him.

I can't be careless... What if the subsequent Sequences of Devil has a power similar to Faceless? Klein gripped his cane tight and slowly approached, then he gave a probing shout.

Detective Stuart abruptly turned his head and nervously said, "Mr. Moriarty, I received a threatening letter. It said: 'All of you will die!'"

"You received it as well?" Klein blurted out in surprise while also finding it understandable.

Stuart was also one of the detectives that Isengard Stanton had gathered for the investigation of the serial murders.

Stuart's eyes widened abruptly.

"You received it too?"

"Yes." Klein nodded seriously.

More than one actually... he added silently.

"What should I do? I first went to visit Mr. Stanton, but I heard that he was attacked, so I immediately came to you. Oh, thank God for His blessings. I was about to leave!" Stuart blurted out.

Klein pointed to the door.

"Let's talk inside."

After entering the living room, Klein excused himself to the bathroom and hurriedly went above the gray fog to perform two divinations. First, it was to confirm that the person was Stuart. And second, if there was any relatively serious danger that night. He received a revelation confirming both.

In other words, Stuart wasn't the enemy in disguise, and it would be a night of considerable danger.

Of course, that danger might not happen right in front of Klein, but someone might be wiped out in secret. That was the limitation of divination. All he could receive was a revelation of a certain degree, not the entire answer. He was unable to get a precise answer.

Furthermore, the limitations in mysticism couldn't be solved by techniques such as exclusion or dichotomy.

Returning to the real world, Klein pressed the mechanical button of the toilet bowl, and in the midst of the splashing water, he washed his hands and opened the door.

"Stuart, would you like coffee or tea?" Klein asked in a completely composed manner.

Stuart stood up and shook his head.

"No, we should discuss the problem first. Although I've received many threatening letters in the past, none of them can be compared to what I received today. He must've written them using fresh blood! My intuition tells me that he'll definitely take action, and that he has the ability to do so!

"By the way, Mr. Stanton was attacked by that same person, wasn't he?"

"I think so," Klein said stoically before sitting down. "This likely has something to do with the previous serial murders. The common thing that you, me, and Mr. Stanton share in common is that case."

Stuart's reaction is a little too extreme... Is he spooked out by the attack on Mr. Stanton? At the same time, Klein was carefully observing Stuart.

Being infected by his attitude, Stuart calmed down significantly. He sat down again and said while deep in thought, "It seems to be the case..."

Before he could finish his sentence, tinkling sounds suddenly echoed in the room.

Someone had rung the doorbell.

Stuart instantly jolted, like a frightened bird.

Klein frowned as he looked at him before getting up to head for the door.

As soon as he touched the handle, the scene outside appeared in his mind.

The visitors were Detective Kaslana in her gray tweed coat; her red-haired assistant, Lydia; and several other men who looked familiar.

They're all the private detectives who Mr. Stanton had assembled... As expected... As Klein recalled, he recognized the visitors.

He pulled open the door and took two steps back.

With bushy eyebrows and slightly drooping cheeks, Kaslana looked at Klein and Stuart who was behind him. Without exchanging pleasantries, she bluntly said, "We've all received the same threatening letter, so I believe you guys did too, right?" "Yes," Klein replied solemnly.

Kaslana didn't shy away from exhaling a breath of white mist.

"We were all assembled by Mr. Stanton to participate in the investigation of the serial murders. That's the only thing we have in common."

"I think so too." Klein pointed inside his house. "Let's talk inside."

Watching the six private detectives enter, Klein quickly analyzed the intentions of the Devil dog's master.

To stir up such a huge commotion, this will soon attract the attention of the official Beyonder organizations. Who knows, there might be a demigod powerhouse guarding this area, so how would he take his revenge?

He's just being provocative, making the military and the Beyonders from the three Churches send people to protect all these private detectives. With the official Beyonders not daring to be negligent, it will scatter personnel and exhaust them by making them run around. Is all this to take revenge on the main target of the attack from back then?

In the process, he might even have a chance to kill some of the official Beyonders...

As for the private investigators, he will only take action much later, once their wariness has relaxed...

Of course, if probes such as this give an opening, then he definitely wouldn't let it go...

To Devils who can sense danger ahead of time, this is a method that plays on their strengths.

However, the three Churches, together with the military and the royal family, have many experts and Sealed Artifacts. They have no lack of demigods or Grade 0 and Grade 1 Sealed Artifacts. Is the master of the Devil dog so certain that there are no powers or items that can restrain this strength of his?

No, he definitely wouldn't dare.

The official powers, especially the Nighthawks, Mandated Punishers, and Machinery Hivemind, have been fighting Devils for who knows how many years. In the Fourth Epoch, even in the more ancient Third Epoch, there was no lack of similar deeds.

The master of the Devil dog is at most a Sequence 5. As long as anything goes wrong, to the point of nothing going wrong, he can be torn apart by a demigod or a terrifying Sealed Artifact. Why would he still dare to make such attempts?

Or it could be said that he's simply toying with the officials and that he wouldn't act, doing it time and time again...

Yes, there's another possibility. Using the threatening letter, he's able to get more than half the targets gathered together. Then, using the official Beyonder organizations' counterbalancing of each other and the procedural and bureaucratic tendencies, create a time delay...

The attack on Mr. Isengard Stanton must've been handed over to the Machinery Hivemind, who is in charge of supernatural affairs in Hillston Borough, but the ones who killed the Devil dog were mainly comprised of the Nighthawks. The two organizations definitely don't communicate in detail too much...

Well, it can also be assigned based on Mr. Stanton's faith... Which deity does he believe in... I don't seem to know, nor can I tell...

In short, with so many private investigators living in different districts and with different faiths, the division of jurisdiction is a troublesome matter, and joint operations aren't so easy to achieve.

At this moment, the ones protecting us should only be two or three groups of official Beyonders. At the very most, they would be at the level of deacons, and they wouldn't use Sealed Artifacts which are too powerful or dangerous. Even a demigod High-Sequence Beyonder wouldn't direct their gaze over to us that quickly.

This would give the Devil dog's master a chance.

Although three to four groups of official Beyonders can definitely kill one or even more than one Sequence 5, as long as he takes advantage of the situation, there's a good chance that he can successfully escape.

Klein was able to deduce two or three possibilities in just twenty to thirty seconds, and giving each of them a preliminary opinion.

Thinking of the divination outcome that indicated that there would be significant danger tonight, Klein thoughtfully nodded his head, closed the door, and entered the living room. He said to the sitting or standing detectives, "Have you called the police?" *There are almost half of the people, who were assembled back then, gathered here...* he surveyed the detectives and muttered inwardly.

Representing the rest, Kaslana replied, "Some have called the police, while others have tried to find Mr. Stanton or familiar friends. Finally, all of us got together and discussed about visiting you, the great detective."

Klein gently nodded and deliberately said, "Everyone, don't be too nervous. The person who sent the letter should be trying to get revenge for that serial murder, but he's only one person, with at most one or two companions. As for us, we have a total of eight detectives, all skilled in combat and shooting, so why should we be afraid of him?

“Besides, we were not the only ones assembled by Mr. Stanton, and it must be the same for those who received the threatening letters. They just didn’t end up meeting you or come to visit me.”

Upon hearing his words, Kaslana and her assistant, Lydia, revealed doubtful expressions, as if they were unsure of something.

Another detective took a deep breath.

“Mr. Moriarty, perhaps it’s as you say, we need not be afraid of him.

“But he’s a sinister snake lurking in the dark. No one knows when he will launch an attack, and no one can guard against it in advance. Furthermore, he might even harm our family members.”

“Family members?”

“Oh, my wife!”

“No, my little angel!”

The detectives were instantly overwhelmed by their emotions as they exhibited exaggerated reactions.

Standing behind Klein, Stuart was trembling with fear and anger.

“No, I don’t want that...” he murmured, almost losing control of his emotions.

Just as Klein and Kaslana attempted to calm them down, Stuart suddenly drew his gun and aimed it at the back of Klein’s head!

His eyes were glazed over, and his emotions seemed to have completely overwhelmed him.

While Stuart was raising his gun to aim, Klein, who had long been on guard, had already detected it. He lunged forward at the same time as Stuart performed his series of actions.

Bang!

Stuart, who was clearly out of control, pulled the trigger, and the bullet grazed the side of a private detective's face as it hit the wall.

Instantly, the other detectives pulled out their revolvers as a result of the stress. It was as if they were looking at the enemy, turning the scene extremely chaotic.

Among them, Stuart and a private detective had flushed faces and bulging veins. Their eyes burned with a mixture of fear and anger, as though they had turned into so-called devils.

At this moment, Kaslana bellowed, "Stop!"

Her voice wasn't loud, but it was filled with awe. It made everyone's body tremble, and they subconsciously complied.

Although there was a brief moment of silence, everyone's mood didn't seem to improve. Klein had already rolled over to the other side and stood up with his revolver in his hand.

His mind raced, and he couldn't afford to hide his thoughts. He planned to rely on his hallucination ability to calm down the few visitors.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

Ding dong, ding dong!

A few of the private detectives suddenly became alert, and their eyes revealed a hint of lucidity.

The tinkling of the doorbell was like a bucket of cold water that poured over their heads.

Stuart looked at the revolver in his hand and mumbled in a daze, "What was I doing just now..."

The official Beyonders have made their move? Klein breathed a sigh of relief, approaching the door as he held his revolver.

The moment he held the handle, the image of the person outside appeared in his mind.

It was a man in a black coat and a hunter's hat. He had gray temples, and a thin face—Isengard Stanton.

The detective's face was somewhat pale, and his left arm was propped up near the shoulder.

He really is alright! Klein was delighted at first, but then he became cautious—he remembered the day when Marionettist Rosago had transformed into a constable to knock at his door.

Klein placed his finger on the trigger, pulled the door open, and took two steps back.

Isengard Stanton smiled and nodded at him.

"Thank you for your visit this afternoon; otherwise, I might not have been able to continue playing hide-and-seek with that devil.

"You saved my life."

This... Could it be that the correct interpretation of "a suitable date for visiting Isengard Stanton" is that by visiting him this afternoon, I was able to help him out of trouble? What about the next few days of "suitable dates for visiting?" By skirting around the murder scene, I wouldn't be suspected? Klein didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He didn't let his guard down as he made way.

"What exactly happened?"

"We'll talk later." Isengard suddenly lowered his voice and laughed. "Do you wish to discuss the subject of Beyonders in front of Stuart and the others?"

So here you are mentioning Beyonders to me so naturally? That's right, I was able to remain in a deadlock with the master of the Devil dog for more than ten minutes. That serves to prove that I'm no ordinary person... Besides, the suggestion I previously offered pointed straight

at a Devil-turned animal... Klein quietly stayed behind Isengard Stanton by two steps.

Upon seeing this great detective, Kaslana and her assistant, Lydia, let out a sigh of relief. Stuart and the other private detectives also showed a look of relief.

“Are you alright, Mr. Stanton?” they asked.

Isengard slightly moved his left arm and said, “A little injured, but not too badly.

“Okay. Everyone, don’t be nervous. This will be over soon. The police are waiting for that bastard in the darkness nearby.”

“is it because of the serial murders?”

“Have you locked onto the suspect?”

“Will he hurt the innocent?”

...

The private detectives asked frantically.

Isengard pressed his right palm down.

“Don’t worry, I’ll tell you in detail in the time to come, but before that, I need to find out a few things from Sherlock and Kaslana. We’ll head to the activity room for a few minutes.”

His accumulated prestige made the detectives sit down without rebutting.

Although they were still worried, they no longer had the problem of fretting or suddenly losing control of their emotions.

After entering the activity room and closing the wooden door, Klein took a look at the enclosed room and suddenly thought of something.

This kind of environment is very suitable for using items like the Biological Poison Bottle!

Ahem... Klein cleared his throat, walked across the room, and opened the window.

He still didn't relax his wariness against Isengard Stanton, nor did he believe that Kaslana was absolutely trustworthy.

Isengard looked around, directly taking Klein's reclining chair before chuckling.

"Being old, I still like to sit like this."

Sitting on a single sofa, Klein asked again, "Mr. Stanton, what exactly happened?"

Isengard looked at Kaslana, who was standing behind a coffee table, and said, "We're all Beyonders, so I won't explain stuff pertaining to general knowledge."

"Beyonders?" Kaslana first looked at Klein, then at Isengard, slightly surprised but not all that shocked.

So it turns out that you're also a Beyonder... Why were you stumped by a weak ghost back then and unable to even discover the problem... Yes, perhaps she's from a Sequence that isn't good at dealing with shadows or wraiths... Klein responded to her gaze.

Isengard smiled and said, "I once went to the Lenburg for four years of studies, where I came into contact with the Beyonder world and became a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

"After returning to Backlund, I gradually established a good relationship with the military, the Church of Evernight, and the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, but I didn't dare to reveal my true identity, because the Mandated Punishers would definitely eliminate me as a cult's heretic. On this matter, the other official organizations wouldn't help me directly, because that would be equivalent to starting a war with the Church of Storms.

"As expected of the Tyrant's Church." "Tyrant?"
Klein asked in passing.

Isengard took out his pipe, but only sniffed the tobacco.

"This is what our Church internally calls the Lord of the Storms.

"Alright. Let me first return to what happened today. The person who attacked me and delivered threatening letters to you is the master of

the serial murderer from before. Heh heh, you should know that the murderer is a black dog of the Devil Sequence, especially Sherlock. You were the first to point out that the Devil might be an animal."

Klein smiled, neither denying nor admitting it. Kaslana also just clasped her hands together, not saying a word.

Isengard shook his head and laughed.

"Don't worry, I'm not an enforcer, but as a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, I can't preach in Backlund or officially establish an organization. I can only rely on you and others like you for help."

In other words, you can help us take the blame? Klein mocked inwardly.

Isengard continued, seeing that they were still not making any admission.

"The Devil dog's master is a Sequence 5 expert. Yes, according to what I know, the Devil pathway's Sequence 5 is Desire Apostle. They can use and control everyone's emotions and desires, enticing them to be corrupted.

"When facing a Desire Apostle, one mustn't have feelings that are too intense. One mustn't make or exhibit overt desires; otherwise, they'll immediately be remotely controlled by him. Otherwise, a seed might be planted in them or have it catalyze immediately.

"This will make people exhibit many problems as they gradually become corrupted. They might also lose control of their emotions at a critical moment and be unable to put up any resistance...

This is a portion of the Beyonder powers a Desire Apostle has. I have confirmed these aspects from my battle with him."

Upon hearing this, Klein suddenly understood one of the reasons why the culprit had sent out threatening letters and made such provocative actions.

He wanted to anger us, making our emotions experience violent changes so that he could bury a corruption seed or catalyze our emotions, making it erupt out of control!

This would make his follow-up attacks simpler and easier!

Fortunately, I'm a Beyonder who has experienced many things. At that time, all I had was vigilance and caution... When Stuart and the others saw the threatening letter, their emotions clearly changed, so the Desire Apostle had planted a seed in them...

If we hadn't been able to stabilize them in time, the situation would've become chaotic with the internal strife, giving the surrounding official Beyonders little time to react, and thus, giving the Desire Apostle ample opportunity...

Back when I was in Isengard Stanton's house, I felt that time moved slowly. Was it a result of the magnification of my sudden increase in vigilance, tension, wariness, and other emotions?

Klein thought back and felt lucky.

"So that's how it is..." Kaslana seemed to gain an understanding of many things.

Isengard rubbed his temples and said, "I was almost manipulated by him, which resulted in my injuries. Afterward, I used a mystical item to play hide and seek in the house. It was only when Sherlock visited and the three sides came to a stalemate did I get a chance to have a breather.

"My poor assistant was looking forward to returning to Lenburg for Mass on New Year's Day." At this point, he sighed.

"When the police arrived, I took the opportunity to escape and then used the river to escape the pursuit," Isengard added. He then asked, "Sherlock, Kaslana, how do you plan on handling this issue?"

After a moment of silence, Kaslana said, "Mr. Stanton, do you have any suggestions?"

Isengard said, “First, take the protection of the official Beyonders, preventing the Desire Apostle from daring to take action. While this is happening, we should hope that he’s quickly caught or killed.

“If our hopes aren’t met, it’s impossible that the official Beyonders would allocate people to constantly protect us. Then, we only have two choices. First, it’s to change our identity, including our families’ and move to a different place with their help. However, no one can guarantee that the Desire Apostle won’t discover this. Second, we can directly join a corresponding official organization and become an external member. That way, our identity and place of residence will change as well, but it’s much safer.”

Join a corresponding official organization? The Machinery Hivemind? Or go to places like Lenburg or Masin to join the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom? Wouldn’t I then come to have three last names—no, a believer of three Churches? Klein felt an inexplicable sense of absurdity.

He thoughtfully asked for advice, “Are there no other solutions?”

At the same time, there was no change in Kaslana’s expression. It was unknown what she was thinking.

Isengard Stanton rubbed his pipe and said, “Yes, that is that we join forces to create an opportunity so that we can quickly find and detain the Desire Apostle.

“Of course, the perfect outcome would be us killing him directly.”

Klein didn't have too big of a response in regards to Isengard Stanton's suggestion. He looked at the tightly-closed door of the activity room and said, "As far as I know, a Devil can predict danger before we take action, and they can even determine the source of the danger, thus providing an effective response.

"It's hard to find and restrain him."

Isengard nodded slightly and said, "Yes, that's indeed the case, but this doesn't mean that there are no solutions." "What solutions?" Kaslana immediately asked.

Isengard smiled and said, "I fought him head-on and witnessed his Beyonder powers of predicting danger, so I have a rough idea of its strengths and weaknesses.

"A Devil can indeed detect danger before it happens, and it can be done so for quite a significant period of time prior to the danger. As long as we make any plans and take decisive action that targets him, he would receive the corresponding premonition. Of course, it has to be something that can really harm him."

No, the truth is that the strengths and weaknesses of different types of Devils are different. Some of them might only be capable of detecting danger ten to twenty minutes in advance... Klein silently retorted, but he didn't say it out loud.

Isengard continued, "The flaw of premonition powers is that it can only detect the person and location of the danger, but it doesn't know the specific details. This gives us an opportunity to take advantage of it."

"What opportunity? I don't think we can trap a Devil that can predict danger," Kaslana asked incredulously.

Klein also nodded in agreement.

Of course, I can use the gray fog to deceive the Desire Apostle, making him unable to detect danger ahead of time. But the problem is, how can I expose the secret of the gray fog in front of others... Klein silently added a few words.

Isengard chuckled.

“It’s true that it won’t work normally, but the Beyonder world is full of incredible things.

“I’m a Sequence 7 Knowledge Keeper of the Reader pathway, also known as Detective. By honestly telling you this, it’s a way of showing my sincerity in cooperating.

“In this situation, I think honesty is more important than anything else.”

Only Sequence 7? How could a Sequence 7 escape from a Desire Apostle? It seems like Mr. Stanton has a powerful mystical item... Enlightened, Klein shifted in his seat.

“Does a Knowledge Keeper have the ability to suppress a Devil’s premonition powers?” Kaslana asked with her body leaning forward.

“No,” Isengard said with a laugh. “However, I have a ring. It originates from a Rampager at Sequence 6 of the Reader pathway. It allows me to differentiate, recognize, remember, and mimic all the Beyonder powers I’ve seen before. Of course, against more powerful Beyonder powers, the chance of failure is higher.

“Haha, there is a maxim in our Church, omniscience means omnipotence.”

Why does it sound so familiar... Furthermore, the description of the item... Klein was about to run through his memories when he saw Isengard Stanton take out a gorgeous ring.

The ring was inlaid with many small diamonds. Together, they surrounded a beautiful emerald-green gem that looked like a human eye.

Just by looking at this ring, Klein felt dizzy, as if he had overworked his mind.

Isn’t... Isn’t this Sealed Artifact 2-081? Isengard Stanton is Old Mister Eye of Wisdom? Klein looked up in surprise at the detective sitting in the reclining chair.

That ring was the Sealed Artifact 2-081 which Eye of Wisdom had flaunted to him previously and had used several times in the Beyonder gathering!

Eye of Wisdom... This code name does sound like it's related to the

Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom... Klein, using his Clown's ability to control his expression as he looked quietly at Isengard Stanton.

In the end, he found that some of the outlines of the great detective did match Eye of Wisdom, but there were many details which were highly different.

His ability to disguise himself is very impressive... Was it done with the help of 2-081? Klein made a rough judgment.

At this moment, he suddenly thought of a scene.

If Mr. Stanton says, "Let all of us work together to resist the Desire Apostle, and the most important thing is honesty. I have already described my Sequence and mystical item. It's your turn." What should I say? Silently take out the Sun Brooch which he sold to me?

At that moment, wouldn't he be going, "Nice, so it's you, punk!"

While Klein was imagining things, Kaslana looked at the ring Isengard Stanton showed and asked in envy and puzzlement, "What power are you planning on mimicking to resist the Desire Apostle's ability to predict danger?"

Isengard curled the corner of his lips and chuckled. "The premonition that Devils have towards danger." At that moment, he looked like a hoary fox.

Ah? That actually works? Klein was instantly momentarily unable to figure out the intricacies.

Seeing Kaslana and Klein puzzled, Isengard laughed and explained, "First, which is what we're currently doing, draw up a plan that can actually harm the Desire Apostle and begin working on it.

"Second, the Desire Apostle will sense the danger and know that the danger comes from us and that it stems from this place.

"Third, as a Devil, without any advanced preparations, there are certain things that are instinctual to him that he cannot change. His first reaction is definitely to kill us or to exact revenge on us, and there will be certain changes to his body, after which he will consider whether the current situation is suitable for a counterattack or not, and whether he should choose to stay away from us.

"Fourth, by mimicking the Devil's premonition powers, I'll sense the threat of the Desire Apostle and grasp the source of danger, which is also his present location."

That's... some godly operation... Klein was quite surprised.

But what happens next? The Desire Apostle would run away as soon as he realizes that something is wrong. We won't even have time to chase after him... Doubts immediately arose in him.

Isengard looked at the two of them and smiled.

"According to my deductions, he must be hiding in our surroundings right now. No matter how good he is at remotely controlling the emotions of others, there must be a distance limit. And just now, he had led Stuart and the others to lose control of their emotions.

"After I escaped his pursuit, the reason why it took me so long to appear here was because I was discussing a plan with the Nighthawks, Machinery Hivemind, and the military. They will each send two to three squads who are in charge of monitoring the nearby districts. These districts all have their code names. Heh heh, this will all be within the Desire Apostle's expectations. Even if he senses the danger, he will only treat it as normal.

"As soon as I confirm his location, I will inform the official Beyonders, and they will rapidly seal off the corresponding areas and close in on him."

"But herein lies the problem. How are we to inform the official Beyonders? If we're unable to accomplish this within seconds, the Desire Apostle will escape. Of course, he might've fled when what he just did had failed," Klein said, in thought.

“If that’s the case, we would be out of solutions as well. There’s no plan that’s absolutely perfect. We can only wait for a particular Sealed Artifact’s activation process to complete. When the time comes, the Desire Apostle might’ve already left Backlund, but he might return at any time,” Isengard explained.

He then took out a golden palm-sized item. It looked like a miniature telegraph, but it also had a trumpet on it.

“This is a Sealed Artifact; it can allow my voice to sound out simultaneously up to a range of five kilometers,” Isengard smiled as he introduced it. “Its negative effect is that once it’s activated, all sounds within five kilometers will be transmitted to the user’s ears for an extended period of time. Of course, I can mimic a Beyonder power to mitigate this effect.”

After listening carefully, Kaslana frowned slightly.

“Since there are official Beyonders involved, there doesn’t seem to be any need for our cooperation?”

Isengard carefully put on Sealed Artifact 2-081 and earnestly said, “In order to not alarm the Desire Apostle ahead of time, there’s a void of power in the nearby district. If the target is really here, the three of us need to help each other to retain him as best as we can.”

“I have no problem.” Klein pondered for a moment before agreeing.

Kaslana also nodded and said, “Mr. Stanton, there’s no need for you to explain so much. After all, we’ll cooperate for our own sake.”

“Haha, an explanation is part of the plan, and an agreement means that the operation is about to begin...” Isengard half closed his eyes.

The emerald-green gem on the ring of his right hand began to glow with a dark blue light.

Suddenly, Isengard Stanton stood up, pointing upwards with a grim expression.

“He’s right here, upstairs!”

Klein and Kaslana stood up at the same time, one ready to snap a finger and light a match on the second floor to jump up there directly, while the other followed Isengard towards the door.

None of them expected the Desire Apostle to be so bold as to remain in the vicinity after the failure of the previous machination, right in 15 Minsk Street!

Maybe he was upstairs watching it all with a cold gaze while we were discussing the plan to deal with him! This thought suddenly popped up in Klein's mind.

At that moment, he saw Kaslana's eyes suddenly turn red, and her right hand formed a fist as she punched out at Isengard Stanton's back where his heart was!

This... Klein's pupils contracted as he instantly came to a realization of many things.

The reason why the Desire Apostle didn't flee was because he still had other plans set up!

He still had a seed of corruption in someone's heart that he didn't catalyze.

That person was none other than Kaslana!

One of the only three Beyonders here!

The reason why the unsuccessful attempt at instigating them was so easily resolved was to let their guard down and wait for the critical moment to make Kaslana lose control of her emotions!

The Desire Apostle's biggest target was still Isengard Stanton.

How crafty... Klein snapped his fingers, but it was only an Air Bullet that was fired at Kaslana.

At the same time, he shouted, "Be careful!"

Isengard had a lot of experience too. He didn't care what the situation was as he threw himself forward.

However, Kaslana ignored the bullet, allowing it to strike her arm and allowing blood to splatter everywhere.

Bam!

She punched Isengard in the back, throwing her entire body forward.

Kacha!

Klein heard the sound of bones breaking, and the point of contact was the spine.

Kacha!

When Klein saw Isengard Stanton's back cave in, even he felt a faint pain in his spine.

Isengard fell to the ground with a thud, seemingly instantly losing consciousness from the pain.

Kaslana, on the other hand, stood in her original spot, gasping for breath with a blank look in her eyes. Her forehead was covered in cold sweat, and there was no follow-up attack.

It was as if she had just awoken from a long nightmare caused by her emotions. All the strength in her body had completely disappeared from her previous outburst.

Huff! Puff! Kaslana's body swayed, on the brink of collapsing.

Klein's eyes narrowed as he rushed up to Isengard Stanton in two steps.

He kneeled and tried to help him up.

Isengard, who was sprawled on the ground, cried out in pain, "Run!

"Don't worry about me!"

Obviously, he didn't think that a three-person group which instantly had one heavily injured member and another losing all her strength could retain the Desire Apostle. Thus, he told Klein to immediately escape and meet up with the official Beyonders; otherwise, all three of them would die there and then.

At the same time, Isengard raised his right hand with difficulty, attempting to use some of his Beyonder powers so as to attract the attention of the official Beyonders who were quite a distance away.

As for the tiny "telegraph" with the trumpet, it had long since flown to the wall because of Isengard's fall.

Klein showed hesitation and just as he was about to make a decision, he saw a thick black "liquid" flowing down from the ceiling, quickly forming a pitch-black figure.

The figure seemed to be completely wrapped in a black curtain, only exposing a pair of cold blue eyes.

At the sight of him, Klein felt as if he was seeing the most intense emotions and desires of a living creature: fear, wrath, greed, jealousy, hunger, lust, etc.

The Desire Apostle didn't waste the situation he painstakingly created, and he entered the activity room almost immediately.

At this moment, out of the three-person team of detectives, Kaslana was exhausted from the outburst of emotions, while Isengard Stanton's spine was severely injured, causing him to lose his ability to partake in combat. Only Klein was left unscathed.

However, other than his revolver and Beyonder bullets, all of his mystical items were above the gray fog. Besides, he was facing a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle, a powerhouse capable of nurturing a Devil dog!

At that moment, the corners of Klein's lips curled up slightly.

His right hand, which had been placed on the wound on Isengard's back, abruptly swiped, causing the obvious depression to shift to the side and onto a rib!

The Magician's most miraculous Beyonder power: Damage Transfer!

It allowed a wound to be transferred once on a body, turning a serious injury into a minor injury, but it was unable to transfer the damage to other people or items!

When Klein saw that Isengard Stanton was injured, he had already thought of the subsequent countermeasures.

By first acting as if they were out of solutions to make the Desire Apostle appear, and then transfer the great detective's wound to leave him with only a slight fracture in his ribs, Klein believed that Isengard would then be able to deal with the Desire Apostle with him. It was a struggle for survival that all humans on instinct.

In this way, even if the Desire Apostle realized that something was amiss, it would be too late for him to escape. Once Klein completed

the “treatment” and joined forces with the great detective, they would be able to stall the target until the official Beyonders arrived!

Almost at the same time, the ring that Isengard had pointed outwards began to produce greenness that was filled with vitality. A faint glow soon enveloped Isengard’s body, allowing his wounds to quickly heal.

The fracture on his ribs was instantly healed.

The great detective’s pain was real, but his helplessness was just an act!

However, this overlapped with Klein’s help.

When the Desire Apostle who was about to take action saw this scene, his eyes suddenly widened, and his body stopped abruptly.

Being free from any ensnarement, he turned around and ran towards the window.

During this process, his body quickly collapsed into a sticky black liquid.

The liquid seeped into the ground, penetrated the wall, and disappeared.

Klein raised his right hand just in time to snap his fingers.

The Air Bullet went through the open window and shot outside, sending sparks flying everywhere. However, the Desire Apostle had completely disappeared.

He ran really fast, without any hesitation at all... Are you a Devil or not?... This will only make things worse in the future... The corner of Klein’s mouth twitched as he turned to look at Isengard Stanton who had rolled around and stood up.

The great detective happened to look at him.

“You’re capable of healing wounds?”

“You’re capable of healing wounds?”

The two of them opened their mouths at the same time and asked the same question.

After looking at each other, Isengard shook his head and smiled bitterly, “I never expected that the trap I set would allow him to escape.”

As he spoke, his ring began to glow, and he looked around to confirm that the Desire Apostle had already left.

Isengard then gave a brief explanation.

“I didn’t have the chance to mimic the healing ability this afternoon. Later, I believed that I could use this to set a trap and make the Desire Apostle appear by making him think that I’m injured. Therefore, I deliberately bundled my wound in an exaggerated manner.”

He pointed to the cushion that elevated his left arm to his shoulder.

“Sure enough, it worked. But I didn’t expect you to be able to deal with serious injuries, and...” Isengard sighed softly.

As a result, both of them putting “healing” the injuries as their top priority. No one held back the Desire Apostle, so the moment he realized that something was wrong, he immediately fled.

Both Stanton and I had trump cards that the Desire Apostle didn’t know about, and we wanted to use that to trick him. Who knew that we would cancel each other out and allow him to flee... Is this the so-called two rights make a wrong? Klein helplessly laughed.

“This is because we don’t know each other well enough, and we didn’t have good teamwork.”

“No, it’s my fault,” Isengard said sincerely. “When I saw that you didn’t run away or defend yourself, and instead came over to help me, I should’ve deduced that you weren’t flustered, that you had the confidence and means, but unfortunately while wearing this ring, my brain remained in a highly-taxed state. I wasn’t able to consider anything else.”

So Sealed Artifact 2-081 will passively reduce one’s intelligence... Klein smiled and said, “Mr. Stanton, it’s not the time to discuss who’s responsible. The Desire Apostle has already fled. We should consider our subsequent actions.”

Isengard took off his ring and turned to the door of the activity room.

"The official Beyonders are arriving soon. I'll go outside to calm Stuart and the others. After that, we can come up with a plan. Are you joining me, or do you plan on handling some of your matters?"

The official Beyonders... Mr. Stanton previously mentioned the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, and the military... Please don't be an acquaintance... Yes, my spiritual intuition hasn't warned me, so it's probably not... Mr. Stanton is giving me a chance to clean up and dispose of any sensitive items so that I don't get into trouble with the unfriendly official Beyonders... Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind as he asked, "Mr. Stanton, when you grasped the Desire Apostle's location, where was he?"

Isengard thought and said, "Your bedroom. He was sitting in front of your desk."

...How arrogant... Klein pointed out the door and said, "I'll head over there to investigate. I'll see if he left behind any traces.

"If we can figure out what the Desire Apostle truly looks like, it'll definitely make apprehending him much simpler.

"I'll leave the rest to you."

"Alright." Isengard moved to the side and helped up the weak Kaslana.

Seeing this, Klein suddenly found it amusing.

Having discussed so much and made preparations to set up a trap, we still failed to retain the Desire Apostle and ended up in this state... There are always more accidents than preparations... That's why Magician is just a Sequence 7...

After leaving the room, Klein went straight to the second floor and entered his bedroom.

The arrangement inside remained unchanged, and even the distance between the chair and desk was no different from before. However, Klein seemed to see a figure wrapped in a pitchblack liquid.

He sat there, looking straight ahead, waiting patiently and calmly for a chance.

As expected of a Coldblooded... Klein looked at the glass panes of the oriel window and felt that he could divine if it had reflected something.

The Devil pathway is good at crime, so it wouldn't be so easy for him to leave clues behind... However, I can try going above the gray fog to give it a try... Klein inspected the area and began to burn some of the mysticism notebooks he wrote in passing.

Not long after he finished dealing with the items, he saw a few strangers coming up to the second floor.

The leader of the group was a man with a stiff face but a head of frizzled, messy, and stubborn brown hair.

In his hand was an ancient silver mirror with strange patterns. On both sides of the mirror there were black gems which were decorated as "eyes."

"Hello, Mr. Moriarty. I am Ikanser Bernard of the Church of the

God of Steam and Machinery. Can I inspect this place?"

Klein immediately nodded and said, "No problem."

He then politely said, "Do you need me to follow you and answer any of the questions you might have?"

"Alright. Sorry for the trouble. Mr. Stanton has mentioned to me about your situation," Ikanser said with a smile.

Several of his team members followed behind him. They treated him differently—some ignoring him, some curious, some filled with hostility.

My situation? How exactly did Mr. Stanton introduce me and what story did he make up? As his thoughts raced, Klein followed Ikanser into the bedroom again, while the rest of the official Beyonders paired up, each responsible for a different zone on the second floor.

"This is where the Desire Apostle sat?" Ikanser pointed at the chair in front of the desk.

He had clearly asked Isengard Stanton.

"Yes," Klein answered frankly.

Without another word, Ikanser raised the silver mirror and stroked its surface three times with his right hand.

After a short pause, he said in a deep voice, “Honorable Arrodes, my question is: ‘What did the Devil who was previously sitting here look like?’”

The lights around them suddenly turned dark, as if enshrouded by mist after a rainstorm. A strange aqueous glint appeared on the surface of the silver mirror, forming a scene: a man covered in a sticky black “liquid” sat on a chair with his back to the window while he faced the bed.

Immediately after, the scene changed. The mirror in the corner vaguely reflected the dark shadow’s side profile which was similarly covered by the “pitch-blackness.” But he could vaguely make out an outline.

The Desire Apostle had very high cheekbones and a pair of coldlooking blue eyes.

Seeing the scene in the silver mirror, Klein revealed a pensive expression.

This mirror is very powerful, and it even has its own name. It seems to be a living Sealed Artifact...

Such items might not be too harmful, but the difficulty of sealing it is very high. It's seldom used except for special situations. This person named Ikanser Bernard from the Machinery Hivemind seems to be highly-ranked. He should be a deacon, and definitely not a simple one at that...

Divination is limited, so the outcome would almost be the same as the result shown by the silver mirror. Even if I were to go above the gray fog, I wouldn't obtain a better result.

There's no way to determine the Desire Apostle's appearance. There are countless people in Backlund with high cheekbones and blue eyes...

As Klein was in the midst of his thoughts, the scene produced by the silver mirror quickly dispersed.

Following that, words in blood-red appeared.

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask the question. If you lie or are unable to answer, you will have to accept an arranged mission by me or suffer a penalty."

"..." Klein pricked up his brows when he saw that.

Is this some Truth or Dare mirror? Interesting...

The words which resembled dripping blood slowly changed into new characters, forming a new sentence: "What is Red Light's true name?"

Red Light? One of the leaders of the Great White Brotherhood? One of the seven pure lights above the spirit world? Klein thought through it carefully and realized he didn't know the answer.

He only knew of Yellow Light, Venithan.

Ikanser's throat bobbed up and down as sweat gradually appeared on his forehead.

After a brief moment of silence, he said in a deep voice, “Nanides!”

“Wrong.” The blood-red words on the mirror changed again. “Mission or penalty?”

There was an obvious struggle on Ikanser’s face. Finally, he breathed out and said, “Penalty.”

Just as he finished speaking, a streak of silver-white lightning appeared out of nowhere and struck his head.

With sizzling sounds, Ikanser’s hair stood on their ends, and his body collapsed with a thud. Small amounts of black smoke billowed from his body.

However, the mirror didn’t fall to the ground with him. Instead, it floated by itself and landed on the desk.

After two seconds, Ikanser staggered to his feet and sat there, panting while shaking.

Klein looked at everything in silence, unsure of how to react.

After a while, Ikanser, who had recovered a little, looked at him and said with a forced smile, “You should have heard of Sealed Artifacts and know that they come with certain negative effects.”

“Yes.” Klein looked at the standing hair on Ikanser’s head and suddenly understood why his hairstyle was so frizzled, messy, and stubborn.

Klein couldn’t help but say, “Actually, you could do the questioning alone. There’s no need for you to do it in front of me.”

“Phew, the requirement of using this mirror is that there must be someone watching by the side.” Ikanser was still trembling.

It’s so sentient... Klein took two steps forward and came to the table. He carefully looked at the silver mirror out of curiosity and found that, apart from the strange patterns and two decorative eyes, there was nothing special about the Sealed Artifact.

Ikanser, whose side was facing him, trembled as he chuckled. “You can pose questions to him. We don’t mind.”

"No, I don't have any intention to." How could Klein play Truth or Dare with something like an ouija board?

As he spoke, he tried to touch the edge of the silver mirror.

It's ice-cold to the touch and has a metallic feeling... As Klein had this thought, he saw the ancient silver mirror tremble slightly.

White words quickly appeared on it: "Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, at your service."

Ah? Klein's mind momentarily went blank.

Then, he left the table without any change in expression.

What's going on? This mirror was still playing Truth or Dare with others in a very cold and ruthless manner just a moment ago... How did it become like this in the blink of an eye? Klein was amused and puzzled.

He quickly made a guess based on the information he had gathered.

The silver mirror knows Red Light's true name, so it seems to be related to the spirit world to a certain extent...

And the mysterious space above the gray fog seems to be connected to the spirit world as well. At the very least, when I summon myself, I will be able to see what appears to be the spirit world after passing through the door...

Is this mirror named Arrodes able to sense the aura of the gray fog?

While these thoughts were flashing through his mind, Klein saw that Ikanser had recovered and stood up once again. He grabbed the ancient silver mirror while the other two members in the room also stopped pretending that they hadn't seen anything while they were aimlessly searching the room.

After a series of inspections, Klein bade Ikanser and company farewell and found Isengard Stanton who had returned to the activity room.

"What do we do next?" he asked directly.

Isengard replied with a solemn expression.

"Let's have Stuart and the others have their families move in together. It will make it easier to protect them. However, this can only be a short-term solution.

"You and I, as well as Kaslana, will act normally and receive secret protection. Let's hope the Desire Apostle can be found as soon as possible.

"You're a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, right?"

"Yes," Klein replied as he drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

At the same time, he lamented a little.

For the foreseeable future, I can only go above the gray fog while inside the bathroom...

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey glanced at the elegantly-shaped wall clock and slowly sat down in front of the dressing table despite her nervousness and excitement.

She was heading to the home of her psychology teacher, Escalante, and take the key step of becoming an official member of the Psychology Alchemists.

Before doing so, she needed to time herself well before praying to Mr. Fool for his help.

I should be able to see the angel this time, right? Audrey thought with anticipation.

After a few seconds of silence, she clasped her hands together in front of her mouth and nose and softly chanted the honorific name of The Fool.

In 15 Minsk Street, Klein was standing in the living room, looking at the scene which had finally turned quiet as he sighed.

To him, the Desire Apostle only meant danger, but to Stuart and the others, it was a change in their lives.

I hope it can be settled as soon as possible... With so many Beyonders with so many Sealed Artifacts, there must be something effective against the Devil pathway... In the midst of his thoughts, Klein suddenly heard a series of illusory pleas.

It should be Miss Justice... Having been prepared, he looked around before walking to the bathroom as if nothing had happened.

After locking the bathroom door, he couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

My life has also changed a little...

Before the threat of the Desire Apostle was eliminated, he had to reduce the times he went above the gray fog while being secretly protected by the Machinery Hivemind.

Next week, during the Tarot Club, the itinerary must be simplified. However, no matter how compressed it is, it'll still take nearly ten minutes. Well, constipation is a very normal thing. Who says that Beyonders can't be constipated? Being optimistic, Klein took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

Next, Audrey followed what she had been previously taught and set up a simple ritual, entering the "artificial sleepwalking" state.

When Klein saw her blurry figure inside the crimson star, he went through the procedure: first using his Spirit Body to contain the Black Emperor card, then picking up the paper figurine he cut with his improved cutting skills, and sending it out.

As expected, the paper figurine gathered the power that was being stirred out of the gray fog, turning into a gigantic angel with twelve pairs of black wings.

Audrey watched as the sacred and majestic angel descended before her, wrapping herself in its layers of wings. She was left speechless for quite some time.

This is an angel, Mr. Fool's angel... And it even has twelve pairs of wings, an archangel! This is exactly the same as the descriptions in the legends of canon... This is also an angel of our Tarot Club! Audrey watched as the angel's silhouette rapidly faded away. She suddenly felt that it was exceptionally sweet.

She thanked Mr. Fool with joy, excitement, and piousness, and then she called the maids and told them to get ready for her trip outdoors.

Klein smiled and returned to the living room, looking at the bullet hole in the wall and lost himself in thought.

Should I hang a cheap oil painting to cover it or repair it and paint over it?

...

In Escalante's house at Hillston Borough, Seventh Avenue.

Audrey left her maid and bodyguard in the living room and followed the mistress of the house into the activity room with Susie, her huge golden retriever.

In the activity room, there were two other people waiting. One of them was Hilbert Alucard, the psychologist who was introduced to her by Lady Norma. The other was Stephen Hampres who had organized the previous psychology discussion.

At that moment, although it was already time for the banquet, there was only a single ordinary candle lit in the room.

The candle was placed in the middle of the coffee table as its faint yellow flame flickered, dispersing the darkness in the activity room.

After greeting each other, Hilbert, with his slightly brown skin that was thanks to the tiny bit of Southern Continent blood in him, glanced at Susie, but he didn't say a word.

Audrey smiled apologetically and said, "I feel more secure with it around."

Susie also looked at Hilbert with innocent eyes.

"Understandable. Please have a seat." Hilbert smiled and sat down on the sofa on the other side of the coffee table. Hampres and Escalante also took their seats.

After Audrey had taken her seat, Hilbert lifted the candle wick to brighten it a little.

He looked at Audrey through the candlelight.

“Now answer me honestly. Are you sure you want to join the Psychology Alchemists?”

Under the illumination of the candlelight, his eyes seemed to be dyed with a hint of gold. Deep within his pupils, there seemed to be another eye, a vertical eye.

Audrey’s mind suddenly turned adrift for a moment before she regained her senses. She lightly nodded and said, “Yes.”

Hilbert asked again, “Will you intentionally hurt the Psychology Alchemists?”

His tone carried a strange inducement, as though as long as the person being questioned gave an affirmative answer, they would unwittingly agree and abide by it from the bottom of their hearts.

“No,” Audrey answered very logically.

After a few questions, Hilbert, Escalante, and the others heaved sighs of relief.

The former smiled and asked, “Is there anything else you would like to say?”

Audrey hesitated for a moment and then displayed her sincerity.

“I once purchased the Spectator formula at a Beyonder gathering. I-I’m already a Spectator.”

That Beyonder gathering is called the Tarot Gathering... Audrey thought to herself proudly.

Audrey knew that her mind and psyche were being influenced by some kind of Beyonder power. It was only because of the "Angel's Blessing" provided by Mr. Fool that she was able to miraculously be immune to that state. Therefore, she decided to set certain things in motion, using small secrets to stun her counterparts, so as to hide the more crucial matters, in return for obtaining greater trust.

The reason why she was doing this wasn't because she didn't believe in the angel, but because she felt that she could observe her counterparty just like how they were observing her.

Although she had always "hidden" herself in the "dark" and pretended to not be considered a Beyonder, performing in a way which would not arouse suspicion, she was still more willing to take the members of the Psychology Alchemists seriously. After all, they were professionals, and she could only be considered a dabbler in the Beyonder circle. She lacked the experience and wasn't flexible enough. It was very possible that she would expose certain problems from things she had yet to realize.

In that case, she might as well take this opportunity to "confess" and completely dispel some of the doubts of the Psychology Alchemists' members.

She had called the descent of the angel and its envelopment of her with its wings as a "blessing."

Upon hearing Audrey's reply, both Escalante and Hampres showed a brief look of surprise. For a moment, they even doubted their own powers.

As for Hilbert, he curled the corners of his lips into a faint smile, showing no abnormal reaction.

He nodded in satisfaction and gently said, "Your honesty is admirable.

"Anything else?"

Audrey pretended to be in a trance as she shook her head.

"There isn't anything else."

Hilbert thought for a moment before asking a few more questions.

“Which Beyonder gathering did you buy the Spectator formula from? Who did you buy it from? Where did you get the ingredients for concocting the potion?”

Audrey’s eyes darted around slightly as she showed an expression of recalling.

“I have to keep the Beyonder gathering a secret.

“I was unable to see what the person who sold me the Spectator formula looks like. But from the way he speaks, I could determine that he was a believer of the Lord of Storms.”

Upon hearing that, Hilbert nodded slightly, as though he recalled something.

Audrey continued, “My Spectator potion ingredients were mainly found from my family’s vault. The rest were exchanged from my few friends.”

Two Spectator potions... she added silently.

Most of them were found from her family’s vault... Hilbert, Escalante, and Hampres ruminated over the words, momentarily at a loss for words.

After a few seconds, Hilbert nodded to Escalante and Hampres, indicating that he found everything alright.

After receiving the same reply from the rest, the gold tinge in his eyes faded, and the vertical pupil in his eyes faded rapidly.

Hilbert touched the wick of the candle again, causing the flame to flicker.

In that instance of alternating light and darkness, Audrey discovered that the strange power that affected her had suddenly disappeared.

She controlled her adrift expression and switched to an appearance of doubt and inquiry.

“I didn’t expect you to already be a Spectator.” Hilbert chuckled.

“Huh?” Audrey showed her surprise and panic at the right moment.

Knowing what kind of emotional reaction to show in the appropriate situation and knowing, in detail, what kind of expression and body language to react with was the basic skill of a Telepathist.

Hilbert smiled and said, “There’s no need to be nervous. We don’t mind. That was the last of our tests.

“Congratulations, you have passed all the tests. Now, you’re an official member of our Psychology Alchemists.”

“Alright then...” Audrey hesitated, then she smiled. “It felt like a dream.”

She then stood up, lifted the edges of her skirt, and bowed at Hilbert and the others. She then said with a faint smile, “We are now companions.”

Escalante and the others immediately stood up and bowed to the beautiful girl of noble status who was so polite to them.

After the two sat back down, Hilbert organized his words and said, “Miss Audrey, I’m going to formally explain to you about the situation of the Psychology Alchemists.”

“Alright,” Audrey said with a smile. “Just call me by my name.”

Hilbert nodded. Leaning back, he crossed his right leg and clasped his hands.

“The original Psychology Alchemists was just a seminar for enthusiasts who all believed that the mind has limitless power and infinite wonders.

“Later on, this seminar obtained a treasure map and found the relics left behind by Hermes.”

“Hermes of the Hermes language?” Audrey asked in excitement.

“Yes, he was one of the earliest masters of mysticism from the human race, and the language of ancient Hermes that he created resonated with the power of nature. He was active during the dark Second Epoch.

Back then, humans were only the servants and slaves of giants," Hilbert said with utmost reverence.

He let out a soft sigh.

"The original members of the Psychology Alchemists found a lot of things from the ruins. They discovered that Hermes was a mysticism master in the field of the mind. His research target was the dragons that ruled the sky during the Second Epoch. To be precise, the dragons of the mind.

"The information he left behind shows that mind dragons have advanced far into this field and have achieved the same level of achievement as deities."

I know. The Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt was an ancient god... Audrey thought quite complacently.

Hilbert sighed and said, "Those materials laid the foundation and direction for the research of our Psychology Alchemists.

"We believe that the mind has many secrets and that every one of them is hidden somewhere deep and difficult to grasp. Heh, forgive me for using the adjective 'deep,' which seems to be the most appropriate term to me.

"The slightest mistake in the study of those secrets would cause irreversible harm to the body. Audrey, you have to remember that matters in this aspect needs to be done carefully." After Audrey nodded, he continued.

"If we can unravel the secrets of the mind, then we can, on the one hand, unearth the power hidden deep in one's consciousness, and accomplish many miraculous deeds, and on the other hand, we can influence or even control the minds of others.

"After reaching this level, what lies ahead is the sea of gathered collective subconsciousness, which is the place we look forward to the most. Of course, the description of a collective subconsciousness isn't accurate enough; I prefer to call it the 'mind world of all living beings.' It has a veiled and miraculous connection to the spirit world."

“If one can master this ‘mind world,’ what kind of Beyonder powers would we obtain?” Audrey showed her curiosity at the right moment and her lack of knowledge in this area.

Hilbert smiled and said, “You should’ve noticed some of the wonderful phenomena in the real world. When we wish to receive something, it will happen to appear. When we want to visit a friend, they will happen to knock on the door. And when we desire something to happen, it begins at that exact moment.

“You might say it’s a coincidence, but sometimes there are too many coincidences. Our research shows that many of these coincidences are caused by an unconscious, magical influence of the mind.

“When you master the ‘mind world,’ which is also the sea that gathers the collective subconscious, then you will master ‘coincidences,’ creating magical phenomena that make chance appearances as an echo of your mind. It will appear as you wish.”

“Th-this is too amazing.” Audrey had heard The Sun mention the Dragon of Nightmare before, but the description was far less detailed than Hilbert’s.

Hilbert chuckled and said, “At our level, it’s better not to discuss such a deep and profound question. If we do, we’ll easily lose ourselves. I’ll continue introducing the Psychology Alchemists.

“The discovery of the ruins marked the establishment of the organization. The members at the beginning wanted to maintain a state of pure academic discussion, but they would always need help when encountering matters. Similarly, they lack items and research materials. That’s why the Psychology Alchemists slowly became systematic and transformed into a real secret organization.

“However, compared to other secret organizations, our structure and relationships are still relatively loose.”

“That’s what I like about it,” Audrey expressed her opinion.

Hilbert explained the main rules and regulations, before finally concluding, “When you reach a higher rank, you’ll be able to meet the other members.

“I’ll now give you the Sequence 8 Telepathist potion.”

They did prepare a Telepathist potion as expected... Audrey was both glad and proud.

After seeing the lustrous potion, she hesitated and said, “I wish to consume it after I get back.”

She still doesn’t trust us, and she wishes to make confirmation... Hilbert read Audrey’s thoughts and replied with a smile, “Okay.

“With your performance, drinking the Telepathist potion shouldn’t be a problem.”

Audrey beamed and thanked him before asking a probing question, “Can you give me the potion formula to Psychiatrist? I wish to seek out and gather the ingredients, ahead of time, so that I don’t waste any time.”

...When other people join the Psychology Alchemists, other than hoping to get a formula, don’t they hope to apply for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients? Who says it in such a carefree manner and talk about trying to gather them ahead of time? Hilbert, Hampres, and Escalante were speechless for a while as they looked at the girl who spoke of such things with a normal tone.

A few seconds later, Hilbert forced out a smile.

“I’ll help you make the application.

“Normally, this would require contribution points, and contribution points come from the missions we assign you, the research contributions you make, and the new information and materials you gather.”

“Okay, I’ll do my best,” Audrey said briskly.

She remained silent after leaving Escalante’s house, but only until she entered her room and sent Annie and the others away did she turn to the huge golden retriever and smile.

“Susie, we got your potion~!”

It's a pity that the Rainbow Salamander that Alfred found for me couldn't be of use. It can only be exchanged for money... Audrey sighed emotively in her heart.

Susie looked at the bottle containing the Telepathist potion and wagged her tail cheerfully.

Audrey had hung a pair of gold-rimmed glasses around her neck just for laughs.

...

Hillston Borough. In Isengard Stanton's house.

Klein had been invited to breakfast. Apart from him, Kaslana was invited as well.

After eating a mouthful of the soft potato pie, Klein praised, "Mr.

Stanton, your cooking skills are excellent."

Isengard, who had gray hair at his temples, smiled and said, "It's a specialty of Lenburg. And to the Beyonders of the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, being multi-talented is a common trait. Its Sequence 6 is called Polymath.

"It's easy for people to lose control for the corresponding potion. Until now, I still don't have the confidence to make the advancement attempt."

Polymath... This Sequence sounds strong just from its name... The Reader pathway's Sequence 7 is called Knowledge Keeper or Detective. It's a "job" that leans towards grasping knowledge and deduction. At most, it would be accompanied by decent combat techniques and the ability to use machinery, so it cannot be considered powerful. But at Sequence 6, there seems to be a sudden qualitative change, especially more so in the field of Beyonder combat... From the looks of it, each Beyonder pathway has its own critical point below the High Sequences, but it isn't fixed at a particular Sequence. For example, the Seer pathway's critical point is Magician... Klein drank a mouthful of hot coffee and didn't try probing on the secrets to other Sequences. Instead, he smiled and said, "Mr. Stanton, you seem to be quite relaxed. You're not nervous or worried at all."

Isengard didn't answer immediately. He put down his knife and fork, took out his pipe, and said, "You don't mind, right?"

Actually, I do, but the pollution and smog in Backlund is already so bad that a few more puffs of secondhand smoke won't make it any worse... Klein shook his head and smiled.

"This aids in your thinking?"

"More accurately, it's a habit that I have after breakfast every day." Done with his pipe, Isengard took a deep drag.

As the smoke was exhaled, he sighed and said, "Fear, nervousness, and worry doesn't help us face the threat. In that case, why not take it a little easier? The brain will become more active because of this. My assistant easily got worried which led to his fatal disaster. Sigh..."

Isengard glanced at Kaslana and continued, "Furthermore, our opponent is a Desire Apostle. We have to refrain from having intense emotions."

Having said that, he chuckled.

"Most importantly, we have no other means of locating the Desire Apostle."

“What do we do?” Kaslana put down the last piece of bacon and asked seriously.

Isengard took a drag and said in a self-deprecating manner, “When discussing topics like this, I prefer reclining chairs.

“Apart from being able to sense danger, Devils aren’t good at divination or premonition. Therefore, if a Desire Apostle wishes to figure out the main revenge target, he would need to actively investigate and gather information. Otherwise, how would he know which group of private detectives had made considerable contributions to the serial murder? How was he able to precisely pinpoint you and me?

“In such a process, he definitely would’ve interacted with many people. Even in a disguise, he’s bound to leave some clues. In addition to the rough image given by the Machinery Hivemind, this will form clues.

“Similarly, if he wants to attack me, then he has to find out where I live, what are my entry and exit patterns, as well as when I work or rest. He also needs to know if there are powerful official Beyonders protecting me. This requires a considerable observation period and corresponding inquiries, and similarly, this means interacting with others and certain locations. Heh heh, once there’s an interaction, there will be clues.

“I like the maxim: wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him.”

I know that sentence. It was said by Emperor Roselle... Klein smiled.

Soon after, he felt a little despondent, because this was the second time he heard someone mention this maxim in this world.

The last time it happened was when he was in Tingen.

Kaslana, whose cheeks were drooping, sighed.

“As expected of a great detective. I never thought about such things. I admire your observation and reasoning skills.”

Isengard responded with a smile, “Everyone has their own areas of expertise. If it’s just fighting, then I would be defeated by you again and again.

“Sherlock must’ve also thought of the things I just said. He also has outstanding observation and reasoning skills, and he’s an outstanding detective.”

Actually, I felt a little ashamed when you were speaking so confidently earlier... Klein squeezed out a smile.

“No, you’re a true detective, and I’m still a long way off.”

“You really are a modest young man.” Isengard sighed.

He smiled and said, “Next up, we’ll proceed by taking these points in mind. You’ll have to use your own resources and information channels.”

Aside from the Tarot Club, a third of my resources and information channels in Backlund are from you, my good old man... Klein forced a smile and replied, “Alright.”

Apart from the Beyonder gathering held by Eye of Wisdom, the only people he could seek help from were Maric, Miss Sharron, Vampire Emlyn White, and Father Utravsky.

With the Machinery Hivemind secretly protecting me, I’ll have to eliminate Miss Sharron and Maric... I can visit Emlyn the vampire as he’s now a half-believer of Earth Mother, and is under the protection of Bishop Utravsky. He wouldn’t encounter any danger from the official Beyonders... Klein instantly decided on the direction to take.

Kaslana remained silent for a few seconds before replying, “No problem.”

Klein wiped the remaining cream onto the last bit of toast, chewed, and swallowed it at a leisurely pace before asking, “Mr. Stanton, you previously mentioned the activation of a particular Sealed Artifact. Will it be able to help us deal with the Desire Apostle?”

“Yes, it played a critical role in finding and surrounding the Devil dog back then,” Isengard replied frankly. “Its code name is 1-42.” *1-42? A*

Grade 1 Sealed Artifact is highly dangerous and can only be used in limited ways. Even the Backlund diocese can only keep one or two items... A corresponding description flashed across Klein's mind, and he asked with great interest, "What is it? What abilities and negative effects does it have?"

Isengard laughed and said, "That is a secret of the Church of Evernight. I do not know, and I only know that it was originally not in Backlund. It was rushed here as an emergency because of the serial murders.

"It is said that it's a full-body armor which is silver in color with dark-red blood stains. It once caused the destruction of a small city, and over a hundred thousand people died because of it." "Cursed armor?" Klein asked in return by giving it a name.

Isengard spewed a mouthful of smoke and shook his head in seriousness.

"Perhaps it isn't cursed. Some people call it 'Berserker's Armor' or 'Bloodthirster's Armor.' My Church once guessed that the blood it's stained with comes from a deity from ancient times.

"When it was first discovered, it appeared to be nothing out of the ordinary. It was treated as a simple antique, sold and collected by others.

"But as time passed, those who came into contact with it died, one after another. It was an extremely terrifying death, nearly to the point of dismemberment, and after that, with it as the center, death spread outwards. There was no longer any need for contact, and as such, a small city was destroyed.

"This happened early in the Fifth Epoch. The Nighthawks were responsible for the aftermath."

As expected of a Beyonder from the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. He knows enough history and Beyonder events... Klein secretly praised.

Kaslana asked, sounding a little worried, "Will it bring us danger?"

“The Church of Evernight definitely found the right way of sealing it, but for us, it’s best if we avoid contact as much as possible,” Isengard said, half as consolement and half as a warning.

After breakfast, he and Klein went into the activity room where the fight had taken place. Kaslana first headed to the bathroom.

Looking at her back, Klein thoughtfully said, “She seems to be a Beyonder from the Arbiter pathway?”

“Your observation skills are indeed outstanding.” Isengard sat down in the reclining chair.

As Klein walked to the sofa, he whispered in confusion, “This pathway is strictly controlled by the royal family, the military, and the ancient nobles. Very few formulas and ingredients appear in the outside world. Kaslana has such a background?” Isengard smiled and said, “Quite obviously.

“However, even to this point, she hasn’t taken the initiative to mention the relevant matters. This implies that there really is a reason that makes it somewhat inconvenient for her to mention

it.”

He looked at Klein with a smile in his eyes, as if to say: *“aren’t you the same as well?”*

Klein laughed dryly and sat down.

After a while, Kaslana came to the activity room and continued discussing the matter regarding the Desire Apostle with Klein and Isengard.

As she was speaking, her expression suddenly became gloomy and she sighed.

“I was pulled into the most dangerous case this time. I have no idea if I’ll survive this at the end. I-if I were to be killed by the Desire Apostle, I wish to have this on my tombstone: ‘She had a great mother.’”

Kaslana’s voice gradually lowered as her difficult-to-get-alongwith personality seemed to soften.

Isengard shared the same sentiments and nodded.

“Similarly, he’s the most dangerous enemy I’ve encountered.”

He then laughed and said, “If I die because of this, and both of you are still alive, would you be willing to help me deliver my remains to the Holy Temple of Knowledge in Lenburg?”

...Stop raising death flags! Klein’s mouth was half open, and he didn’t know how to stop the two detectives in front of him.

“No problem, but I hope this day will never come.” He tried his best to dispel the thought.

Isengard glanced at him and asked curiously, “Sherlock, what about you? If you were killed by the Desire Apostle, what wish do you have that you hope others can fulfill for you?”

...Revive me! Klein sighed and said, “I hope that I can be buried in a cemetery with good scenery. It’s best if my corpse is intact and is sprinkled with holy water and fresh flowers...”

The core meaning of his words was: *Do not cremate me!*

The three of them fell silent for a while until they heard the tinkling sound of the doorbell.

The visitor was the deacon named Ikanser Bernard from the Machinery Hivemind. His hair was stubbornly squeezing out from the brim of his hat, giving his deep, masculine outline an indescribably messy feeling.

This time, he wasn’t holding the silver mirror named Arrodes. It was unknown where he had put it.

If I have a chance, I wouldn’t mind using that magic mirror to see how my loyal and humble servant would react... Klein thought.

Ikanser didn’t enter. He stood there, looking at the detective trio. He then quickly said in a deep voice, “There’s a clue to the Desire Apostle!”

West Borough, 6 Edward Street.

Ikanser Bernard pressed down on his black hat, pointed at the door behind the fountain, and said to Klein, Isengard, and Kaslana, "We have reverse-investigated the various information channels for any leaks of news or information. Combined with the outline of their side profile, as well—as well as getting the help of the magic mirror, we managed to have a preliminary suspect."

You obviously paused for a moment when you mentioned the magic mirror. I wonder what price you paid to get the answer you wanted... Klein sensed the problem in Ikanser's tone and felt a baffling hint of sympathy for him.

"It's the owner of this house?" Kaslana returned with a question, sounding almost certain.

Isengard Stanton looked around and said, as if pondering, "You chose to inform us directly because you found another piece of evidence?"

"Yes, the portrait of the house's owner proves some of it. Heh, he never takes photographs," Ikanser answered frankly. "Besides, the people around here have seen a big black dog in the neighborhood many times in the past."

"This can basically prove that the suspect is that Desire Apostle." Having said this, Isengard couldn't help but laugh. "Sorry, we were too anxious and didn't give you a chance to introduce the suspect."

As he walked around the fountain and toward the front door of the house, Ikanser quickly said, "The owner of this house is Patrick Jason, the principal shareholder of a small bank. According to the description from his neighbors, he's a cheerful, enthusiastic, and optimistic middle-aged man who has remained a bachelor, but it is believed that he had several mistresses.

"At this level of wealth, the number of servants he hires is utterly inadequate. Every time a banquet or ball is held, he would need to hire a batch of temporary attendants from the City Family Servant Assistance Association. In regards to this, his explanation is due to a

problem of insomnia. Too many servants will affect the silence he needs."

"I can tell that he has many secrets which need hiding, so he doesn't dare to hire too many servants," Isengard said halfjokingly.

Klein, who didn't hire a single servant, said somewhat guiltily, "Perhaps it's simply because his finances aren't as good as others think."

"Yes, that's a factor that cannot be ruled out." Isengard stepped up to the porch and came in front of the main door.

Ikanser looked at Klein and said as if in enlightenment, "You don't hire servants and only have your landlord's maid do temporary cleaning twice a week. Is it to conceal the secret that you're a Beyonder?"

Of all my secrets, that is the most trivial one... Klein deliberately smiled bitterly and said, "Yes."

As they spoke, Ikanser pushed open the front door, and an indescribable stench drifted out.

"The smell of decay..." Isengard made a judgment in an instant.

Ikanser called over a Machinery Hivemind team member.

"Carlson, any discoveries?"

The Beyonder, Carlson, wore thick glasses and had a complicated expression on his face.

"We found a lot of bodies here.

"In the cement in the basement, in the thick walls, and in the places where the garden is overgrown with weeds, one hidden corpse after another was found. The earliest could be from more than a decade ago, and the latest are the servants who were still alive a few days ago.

"Some of them are just bones, some slightly rotten. Deacon, this place is like a human slaughterhouse!"

As he spoke, the Machinery Hivemind members and the carefully selected police officers behind him carried out one corpse after another.

Some of the corpses were dismembered. Tongues, fingers, stomach pouches, eyes, etc. were all lying in disarray. Some of the corpses were only bones.

“It looks like many of Backlund’s disappearance cases will be solved because of this.” Isengard pinched his nose and sighed.

When Klein saw an intestine which was almost dragged across the ground, he exhaled and turned to look around the house.

Machinery Hivemind member, Carlson, muttered again, “Jason paid his servants very high wages and gave them a lot of holidays. The servants living around him were all very envious... Jason’s cook even promised his child that he would be home this week and take him to the circus to watch a performance...” “A true devil...” Kaslana was slightly perturbed.

Looking around, Klein restrained his emotions and solemnly asked, “Why are the furnishings of the house so simple and crude?

“As a banker, even if the bank he owns isn’t big, Jason should’ve had expensive porcelain, excellent paintings, luxurious wall clocks, and all sorts of items made of high-quality silk. Why can’t we see any of that here? Well, the wood for his furniture is still pretty good.”

Carlson glanced at Deacon Ikanser, and after receiving an assenting nod, he said, “It’s clear that Jason had planned this revenge for a long time. He sold the valuable but inconspicuous items in the house, and he had even agreed to the Varvat Bank’s purchase of his estate.

“After killing his servants, he sped up his liquidation and sold the oil painting and other items. He appeared to be certain that he would definitely be found, and he didn’t have any thoughts of getting lucky.

“Before taking action, all he had left was his house, furniture, and identity. It’s unknown where he had moved large quantities of cash, precious metals, and jewelry to.”

After listening to Carlson’s description, Klein suddenly thought of a few adjectives: calm, rational, crazy!

“A true devil,” Isengard evaluated before sharing his deductions. “He is clear-headed and calm in his actions, but he has a strong crazy

tendency and a spirit of adventure, which is characteristic of the past two deeds."

"Therefore, we have to be wary of him taking risks?" Klein grasped the gist of Detective Stanton's words.

"Yes." Isengard gravely nodded.

Next, the few detectives searched the house and found a lot of evidence to prove that Patrick Jason was problematic. They also saw the portrait hanging in the activity room.

It depicted a middle-aged man with tall cheekbones, blue eyes with a tiny of gray, ordinary facial features, and neatly-combed hair. He didn't have any special features.

At that moment, Ikanser came in and said to Klein and the others, "We found some items in a secret chamber that confirms that Patrick Jason had attempted to summon an even more powerful devil, but for some reason, he didn't succeed. And those items have confirmed his identity. He's a member of the Devil family known as Beria, so his real name should be Jason Beria."

The Beria family? Klein nodded, unsurprised.

"In the ancient Fourth Epoch, the human faction that worshiped devils formed a scattered alliance known as the Blood Sanctify Sect. This organization was internally divided quite drastically. The three great Devil families of Nois, Andariel, and Beria were a tripartite balance of forces. Their ancestors once received the bestowment of the Abyss, and they worship an evil god by the name 'Dark Side of the Universe.' They believe that 'He' is the ruler of the Abyss and that 'He' is the devastator of the world who would corrupt and degenerate the real world's entire universe," Isengard introduced to the unaffiliated Beyonders, Kaslana and Klein.

Ikanser shook his head and added, "If a deeply divided organization doesn't eventually split, integration and unification are inevitable trends. Various situations and rumors indicate that the Beria and Andariel families have gradually weakened since at least a thousand years ago, to the point of becoming vassals of the Nois family in recent

decades. Well, the Beria family's symbol is the abstract symbol combination of a pentagram and goat horns."

Regardless, the Beria family is still an extremely ancient family with deep roots. It's no wonder Jason was able to raise a Devil dog. Sigh, that's just one of the reasons, another reason is that he owns a bank, even if it wasn't big... In the Second Epoch, the ancient god that corresponds to the Dark Side of the Universe is Devil Monarch, Farbauti. Is there any connection between the two? Klein sighed while feeling curious.

After much searching, the three detectives and the Machinery Hivemind members could only confirm that Patrick Jason was the Desire Apostle, but they were unable to find the man's current location.

On the pretext of getting help from others, Klein took a handkerchief that Jason had used during the Devil summoning ritual, with plans on finding a chance to divine above the gray fog. After all, Jason had dealt with the items he often came into contact with.

Shortly after, Ikanser came to them and said with a heavy expression, "The Nighthawks will be bringing that Sealed Artifact here. We will be making a move first."

"Alright," Isengard and Kaslana answered at the same time.

As for Klein, he had long since raised his hands and feet in approval inwardly.

After exiting Jason's villa, which occupied a large area, Klein looked back and his expression gradually turned grim.

He said doubtfully, "I think there's a problem." "What problem?" Kaslana hurriedly asked.

Klein deliberated and said, "He sold the bank, his business, and many valuable items ahead of time. That means that Jason is prepared to give up his current identity and life. If his motive is solely to seek revenge on the Devil dog, it's not sufficient to initiate such a series of actions."

"Maybe he had a very deep relationship with the Devil dog? Sherlock, you might not think so, but I've seen people who treat pets as family," Kaslana said in disagreement.

Isengard, who was standing beside them, solemnly said, “No, Sherlock is quite right.

“Kaslana, do you know what the ancient name of the Devil pathway’s Sequence 8 is?”

Kaslana revealed a look of contemplation. She had apparently heard of it, but she couldn’t immediately recall it.

At that moment, Klein answered for her in a low voice, “Coldblooded.”

Coldblooded... As she mulled over the name, she suddenly understood why the two great detectives, Moriarty and Stanton, would say so.

Seeing her reaction, Klein pointed in another direction.

“Let’s split up and begin with our own information channels.”

After receiving an affirmative response from Isengard and Kaslana, he left in a hurry. However, he didn’t rush south of the bridge to find Emlyn White.

He wanted to head to the Chissak Police Station and retrieve the fifty pounds he posted as bail.

He has already been proven to be without problems. Both Isengard Stanton and the official Beyonders had given their respective testimonies.

Chapter 421: Expensive Materials

The front door to Patrick Jason's house suddenly burst open, and a group of Nighthawks in black tweed coats jogged inside.

They wore vigilant and alert expressions, as though they were facing an extremely terrifying enemy.

Tap! Tap! Tap! A person decked out in full silver armor walked in.

The armor exuded a feeling that made it seem like it was abnormally heavy. Various details about it adhered to an ancient style, and from its left shoulder, all the way diagonally to the abdomen area, it was stained with a splash of dark red blood that appeared impossible to remove. Coupled with the sputtering red spots in other places, it created a very queer and beautiful scene, as if it was a unique and magnificent decoration.

Soul Assurer Soest took out his pocket watch and gave it a look.

"Change."

The silver armor stopped, lifting its visor to reveal the wearer. It was a handsome man with black hair and green eyes.

"Leonard, hot water has been prepared in the master bedroom's bathroom on the second floor. Don't delay any longer; otherwise, you'll only be able to return to the embrace of the Goddess," Soest exhorted him.

"Yes, Captain Soest." Leonard Mitchell, with the help of the rest of the Nighthawks, removed his heavy blood-stained silver armor.

With red gloves on, he didn't say anything, nor did he hesitate as he rushed to the second floor and found the bathtub still billowing with white steam.

Leonard quickly stripped off his clothes and lied down in the hot water without even exposing his nose.

His skin quickly turned red like a cooked lobster, and strange, scar-like silver lines gradually started to appear on the surface of his skin.

Those silver lines were like pure blade beams which constantly spread outwards and fused with the hot water.

In less than ten seconds, the steam disappeared and a thin layer of transparent ice formed on the surface of the hot water!

Only when all the silver lines dispersed did Leonard sit up, panting heavily.

He cocked his head slightly as if he was listening to something. Then, he said with a lowered voice, “Old Man, do you know the origins of 1-42?”

An elderly voice rang out in his mind.

“You are getting more and more impolite.

“I don’t know where that strange armor comes from.”

Without waiting for Leonard to ask further, he let out a chuckle.

“But I think I recognize the owner of the blood.” “Who is it?” Leonard asked curiously.

The slightly-aged voice said in a low, deep voice, *“An ancient god before the Cataclysm.”*

...

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

As soon as Klein stepped into the quiet prayer hall, he saw Father Utravsky and Vampire Emlyn White, one in the front and one in the back, sitting on chairs of different heights. Their hands were placed in front of their mouths and noses, with their fingers clasped together and palms empty.

This was the unique prayer position of the Church of Earth Mother.

Right now, Emlyn White’s expression was gentle and calm, without any trace of the arrogance and vexation which he had before.

Klein slightly moved the corner of his mouth as he silently drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

He took a seat at random, waited until the prayer was over, and then walked over to Emlyn White. He said with a smile, “You are especially pious today.”

“What?” Emlyn snapped to his senses as he muttered to himself while his expression was pale. “What have I done, what have I done...”

His voice trailed off, as though recalling what he had just done.

“Maybe it’s not a bad thing.” Klein consoled the vampire in an utterly unconvincing manner before sitting down next to him.

“I don’t want to hear others say something like that. Although I feel my resistance is weakening...” Emlyn wore a livid expression and he said with a tone filled with despondence, “But I don’t want to betray the moon!”

Klein didn’t continue with the topic that depressed the vampire as he casually asked, “Do you Sanguines worship the Primordial Moon, or a particular deity that represents the moon? Or perhaps, the two of them can be considered the same?”

“All of them.” Emlyn slightly raised his chin, “To a pure-blooded Sanguine, we obviously believe in the deity that represents the moon. of course, it is the god who represents the moon. Her name is Lilith, and she is the ancestor of us Sanguine, an ancient deity. And when humans become Sanguine, they tend to worship the Primordial Moon. Under normal circumstances, the two can be considered equivalent, but there are times when they do not overlap and there are differences.”

“A human becoming a Sanguine?” Klein wasn’t surprised that Emlyn White was able to say the name of an ancient god from the Second Epoch. Instead, he was more concerned about the tidbit about humans becoming Sanguine.

Is this the Vampire Sequence that Mr. Azik had mentioned? he thought.

Emlyn said with a slightly complicated expression, “Yes, there are two types. One is transformed from a bestowment from a powerful Sanguine, and the other is transformed from consuming a corresponding potion. The latter is our most hated enemy.”

“Why?” Klein vaguely guessed at the answer.

Emlyn gritted his teeth and replied, “The main ingredient of their potion is our blood essence.”

As expected... Klein turned his head and sized up Emlyn a few times.

The gaze left Emlyn feeling a little nervous as he snorted.

“You’re already a Beyonder; there’s no way you can switch pathways!”

It’s only because this is my first time seeing a walking, no—a living, no—talking Beyonder ingredient... However, in a certain sense, every human Beyonder is also such an ingredient... Klein originally only wanted to inwardly make a casual joke, but soon he felt a strong sense of sadness.

At this moment, Emlyn looked at the Bishop Utravsky, who was carefully polishing the Sacred Emblem of Life, and said in a low voice, “I found two ingredients that you wanted.”

“What are they?” Klein didn’t attempt to hide his joy.

Emlyn responded smoothly, “Thousand-faced Hunter’s mutated pituitary gland and blood. The asking price is 2,000 pounds for the former and 300 pounds for 100 milliliters of the latter.”

2,300... Klein blurted out, “Can I get a discount?”

After receiving his bail money back, he had a total of 2,185 pounds in cash.

For a member of the middle class, this was already quite an abundant amount of savings. Perhaps some people might not be able to save that much money in their entire lifetime, but Klein found that it wasn’t enough...

“No, if it weren’t for me, he would’ve wanted 2,800 pounds, and according to the agreement, you would’ve paid me an extra 150 pounds for a total of 2,450 pounds,” Emlyn said while shaking his head.

Looking at Klein’s expression, he quickly added, “In this era, dragons are rare. Other than the long-lived Sanguine, it is very difficult to find similar Beyonder ingredients elsewhere. Even if they exist, they would be more expensive than ours.”

I'm still short of 265 pounds... Having saved up so much money with such great difficulty, it will be emptied out at once. Yet, I still don't have enough... I hope Mr. Hanged Man will be able to sell the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic as soon as possible... After this, there's still the characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow and a Deep-sea Naga's hair. It wouldn't be any cheaper... There's no way to confirm Little Sun's side of things, with him needing to conduct himself properly. The amount he owes me is probably best repaid by using the means to remove a Rampager's mental corruption in a mystical item. That would be a better form of concealment... Many thoughts instantly flashed through Klein's mind as he felt the light outside the window dim significantly.

He took a deep breath and said, "Okay.

"However, this deal will be delayed for some time. I recently provoked a fellow and am now being protected by official Beyonders. You don't wish for that seller to be locked up in the cathedral's basement, right?"

And I still have to gather the rest of the money... Klein tilted his head slightly to look at the cathedral's dome.

"Official Beyonders?" Emlyn White jumped up and looked around.

Klein glanced at him and said, "Don't worry about it. You're now a priest of the Church of Earth Mother, and you have legal status. Moreover, Bishop Utravsky will protect you."

"I'm not..." Emlyn's denial was exceptionally weak.

He sat down again and suddenly thought of something as he said, "Can the official Beyonders resolve the problem of a psychological cue?"

"Maybe." Klein almost burst out laughing. "But in that case, you will most likely become a believer of the Evernight Goddess, the God of Steam and Machinery, or the Lord of Storms. Of course, you can also choose to become a member of the military's special department. They might be able to send you overseas as a spy to seduce some noble woman.

"I only like dolls and pure, beautiful girls!" Emlyn immediately emphasized.

I can tell that you're a little interested, but only a little... Klein switched gears and asked, "Do you know any members of the Beria family?"

"Beria? That crazy family that worships devils? No, they are devils themselves!" Emlyn blurted out. "Why are you looking for them?"

Klein helplessly said, "I've offended one of them, Patrick Jason Beria, due to a serial murder case.

"Help me find out his recent whereabouts and acquaintances in your circle. If you have any accurate information, I will pay you, depending on the importance of the information."

Of course, this could also be claimed from the Nighthawks, the Machinery Hivemind, and the military... Klein thought with relief.

Emlyn nodded thoughtfully.

"You actually dared to provoke a real devil.

"When you have exact information about him, he will know that you will bring him a great deal of harm."

"It's alright, I have the protection of the authorities," Klein replied indifferently.

After a few seconds of silence, Emlyn said, "Well, I'll try. The payment for information needs to be at least twenty pounds."

After finalizing this matter, Klein didn't stay any longer, and he walked out of the cathedral.

His mind was filled with the question of how he was going to gather the money.

Miss Magician's new book is about to be published. She should receive a sizable amount of money for it. There will still be royalties later on. Perhaps I can promote the Astrologer potion formula to her; however, she hasn't even gathered all the potion ingredients of Trickmaster... Miss Justice has joined the Psychology Alchemists, and I have no formulas to sell her. Sell her knowledge?

The Werewolf Beyonder characteristic is worth about 1,300 pounds, perhaps even lower... Must I produce a mystical item? Or should I think

of a way to get Emlyn White to become a believer of The Fool, receiving tributes at the cost of offering to remove the psychological cue...

Right, Jason Beria carried a lot of cash, jewelry, and precious metals. If he can be found, perhaps I might get a share!

As his thoughts raced, Klein walked out of the cathedral and saw the dark sky and the thin fog.

He sighed and said, “I’m really short on money...”

...

Back at Minsk Street, Klein walked into the bathroom with a thick stack of newspapers in his hand, as if he was about to fight a protracted war.

He wanted to head above the gray fog and use Jason’s handkerchief to divine his whereabouts!

Inside the bathroom in 15 Minsk Street.

Klein took out a paper figurine from a concealed pocket, shook it, and transformed it into a body double.

He made the body double sit on the toilet with a newspaper in hand as a way to deceive others. Then, he hid himself in the shadows, took four steps counterclockwise, and went above the gray fog.

These series of actions were even more magical than magic!

Inside the majestic ancient palace, Klein sat at the very end of the long bronze table, conjuring Jason Beria's handkerchief in front of him.

It was only a projection, but it could also be used for divination as long as the handkerchief didn't leave his body in the real world. The earliest instance was back when he used the projection of the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem in Tingen City as a divination object. At that time, he still didn't know how to summon himself, and he was unable to bring items with spirituality above the gray fog.

Of course, there was still a big difference between using a projection and using the actual object for divination; therefore, Klein often tried his best to use the actual object. But right now, with him being protected by official Beyonders, it wasn't that convenient to carry out a ritual.

If anyone were to find him lighting candles in the day while on the toilet, he would be in deep trouble.

If I can really manage to obtain Jason Beria's location via divination, I can always take the risk by summoning myself and bringing the handkerchief up here if the revelation isn't clear enough... With a mumble, Klein produced a goatskin and a fountain pen. He wrote the divination sentence: "Jason Beria's current location."

Normally speaking, relying on a handkerchief that the target used only during a certain ritual made it impossible to divine the whereabouts of the target since the connection wasn't strong enough, and there was

too much interference. For example, it was very easy to end up provoking the Abyss Grand Duke which the ritual was directed at.

But for Klein, interferences could be eliminated. The so-called Abyss Grand Duke was at most a High-Sequence Devil, and not the incarnation of the Dark Side of the Universe. Above the fog, the mysterious space had already handled deities like the Eternal Blazing Sun and the True Creator. Even a slightly weaker one was at the level of an angel, Mr. Door, and up to this point in time, he hadn't suffered any serious mishaps.

As for the problem of the connection not being strong enough, Klein, who could only be enhanced to a certain degree by the gray fog, was helpless as well. He could only give it a try and try his luck. Perhaps it would only be after he became a HighSequence Beyonder Saint in this domain that he could have the corresponding confidence.

In theory, it's possible. After all, when holding a ritual, one's body, heart, and mind were unified the most. It was also the easiest to communicate with the outside world... Klein, who was now barely considered an expert in mysticism, muttered. He held the handkerchief and the goatskin with the divination statement written on it, and he leaned back into his chair.

He quickly entered a state of Cogitation and constantly chanted, "Jason Beria's current location."

After chanting it seven times, Klein fell into a deep sleep and entered the dream world.

Within the gray world, countless images flashed and intersected with each other in a rather dispersed manner.

Soon, the scene became clear and filled Klein's "vision," which made him feel as if he had entered a dream.

In the dream, the lights were dim and the desk was dark red. A figure was standing in front of the oriel window, looking out at the garden.

There was a glass shed in the garden, with roses blooming inside, bright red in the December cold.

The figure of a man was projected on the window. He was of medium height, with curly brown hair and cold brown eyes. He looked to be in his thirties.

This... Am I not divining Jason Beria's location? Who is this? He feels a little familiar... Klein was puzzled, he but didn't think further about it. He let his spirituality remain in a dispersed state, as if he were roaming some mysterious world.

Just as he raised the question, the man turned and walked to a corner of the room, where there were two large leather suitcases.

The man squatted down and opened one of the suitcases. Inside was a neat stack of bills, with gold bars placed on top of them.

The notes that were exposed were all in ten-pound denominations, while the gold bars shone with an enchanting luster.

The man pulled something out of a hidden pocket of his suitcase, shook it, and opened it.

It was a slightly pale piece of human skin!

A complete piece of human skin!

The man quickly stripped off his clothes and put on the human skin. In just ten seconds, he had become Jason Beria with tall cheekbones, blue eyes with a tint of gray, and neatly combed hair!

At this point, the scene suddenly shattered, and Klein opened his eyes.

It's no wonder that Jason was willing to take a risk. So it turns out that in the past ten years, he has always been wearing a human skin and has never shown his true face... As expected of a calm and crazy Devil... Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Jason had left his portrait in the house, and it didn't garner any suspicion from Isengard and the others, because his neighbors had seen him and knew what he looked like. Even without the portrait, with the powers of the Beyonders of the official organizations, it would've been easy to reconstruct his likeness, and the result would've been even better than a photograph; therefore, there was no reason for Jason not

to have the drive to destroy something like it. This was something very logical.

Who would've thought that he would've left a hoax in somewhere that looked to be most natural! If searches are made according to the portrait, even if the Nighthawks have Sealed Artifact 1-42, it wouldn't be that easy to lock onto the target... Moreover, in both times, he had used his own abilities to conceal his face. Who would've thought that his face, which had been tightly covered and concealed, was actually fake! Klein realized how cunning Jason was.

He rubbed his temples and began to recall the scenes he saw in the dream divination.

A house with a glass greenhouse. That's a pretty obvious feature. There aren't many similar buildings in Backlund! But the question is, how do I report it? The moment I tell the Machinery Hivemind, Jason would definitely sense the danger and start to disguise himself and move away...

Directly find the Nighthawk with Sealed Artifact 1-42? What if I encounter someone familiar? I don't want to turn into ashes and be scattered into the Tussock River... Besides, I can't rush to report it. I just started gathering information, so how is it possible to receive any information from my various channels so quickly...

That fellow is really carrying a large sum of cash and jewelry, a whole suitcase worth of bills... The total value may exceed 50,000 pounds...

Thoughts raced through Klein's mind and it took him a moment to calm down. He decided to wait another two days, then use the appropriate means to inform the Nighthawks in charge of this matter with the revelation he received.

With the divination coming to an end, he returned to the real world, removed his double, and sat on the toilet himself.

...

In the afternoon, Klein threw a coin when he was about to leave.

The revelation he received was that it wasn't beneficial for him to head out.

“There will be danger if I head out?” Klein didn’t hesitate to return to his living room and sit down.

After about twenty minutes, he heard the doorbell ring and saw that it was Isengard Stanton who had come to visit him.

“Mr. Stanton, any progress?” Klein asked rather delightfully.

Isengard pointed to the back of the hall.

“Let’s talk inside.”

“Alright.” Klein made way by stepping aside.

After sitting on two sofas which faced each other, Isengard held his hunter’s hat and took a deep breath.

“The Desire Apostle has appeared again.”

Seeing Klein maintaining his silence, he nodded in satisfaction and continued, “The families of two detectives refused protection, believing that they wouldn’t be implicated, so they remained outside. Today, at lunchtime, they were found dead in their respective offices. One was so horrified that he died from fright. The other was too excited that he expanded the last of his energy.

“They were too stubborn, as expected of believers of the Tyrant, But as a result, the Mandated Punishers have formally involved themselves. It’s said that the few Churches and the military’s High-Sequence Beyonders have cast their gaze over, and they’ve placed the matter of the Desire Apostle as one of the most important events in recent times.”

“Are you hoping that I wouldn’t reveal your identity as a believer of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom?” Klein asked, seemingly enlightened.

“It’s easy to talk between detectives.” Isengard smiled and nodded.

“No problem.” Klein made the promise first, then said, “I have some information channels that are convenient to expose. If I get valuable information from them later, I hope you can help me inform the Nighthawks and keep it confidential.”

As for why it's the Nighthawks instead of the Machinery Hivemind, he believed that he didn't need to be too clear about it. With the intelligence of a great detective like Stanton, he could easily figure it out.

Isengard first agreed to Klein's request, then said in puzzlement, "By telling me, it's the same as letting Jason notice it ahead of time."

"Let's hope we can think of ways of avoiding that... Also, please help me think about other possibilities. That ring of yours should be able to mimic several Beyonder powers," Klein calmly replied.

"Alright." Isengard didn't say anything further.

He pondered for a few seconds and took out his pipe to take a whiff.

"The Desire Apostle's actions today have verified one of my guesses. Heh heh, it's also the question you thought of previously."

"His main purpose isn't revenge?" Klein understood what Isengard was implying.

Isengard leaned forward and solemnly said, "Since Jason has already been through the Coldblooded stage, it means that he's definitely coldblooded. It's impossible that he would go this far for that Devil.

"Sherlock, look. Up until now, all of the official Beyonders in Backlund have been mobilized, and even the High-Sequence Beyonders have shifted their attention to this matter. At this point, if Jason wants to deal with someone else—the true target —wouldn't it be much easier?"

Klein thought over it for a moment and replied heavily, "That makes sense!"

...

After a short exchange, Isengard went on to find Kaslana. After Klein tossed the coin, he went out as planned, heading for the Quelaag Club.

Neither of them had yet revealed their suspicions to the official Beyonders, fearing that it would end up directing harm at Jason, making him detect it and abandon his series of actions.

As soon as he entered the Quelaag Club, Klein met the surgeon, Aaron in the lobby.

“Long time no see,” he smiled and greeted him.

“I’ve been really busy recently,” Aaron replied in a friendly manner, but he maintained his cold expression out of habit. “Besides, my wife recently got pregnant, and I’m going to be a father again.”

“Congratulations. When did this happen?” Klein asked casually.

Aaron thought for a while and said, “It was just confirmed. She should be pregnant for more than a month.”

“More than a month?” Klein was startled, and then he looked into his eyes.

"Yes, a month or so ago." Aaron nudged his gold-rimmed glasses and gave him a positive answer.

A month or so ago? Isn't that when you were being troubled by Will Auceptin-related nightmares? Klein was surprised and puzzled, but he didn't let his emotions show.

In the blink of an eye, he thought of the two divinations he had made.

Will Auceptin was in a dark room with the sound of running water outside.

Was that symbolizing amniotic fluid or blood? Klein's heart chilled as he suddenly understood something.

When he looked at Dr. Aaron again, he wore a rather complicated look in his eyes.

He suspected that his wife was carrying Will Auceptin, a Snake of Mercury!

In the symbolism of mysticism, the Snake of Fate's head and tail are connected, with it devouring its own tail. It implies the cycle of destiny in a hidden manner... In order to avoid his enemy, Will Auceptin took the initiative to secretly initiate a new cycle in advance? Klein guessed based on what he knew.

Dr. Aaron didn't notice the abnormality he was trying hard to hide. He smiled and said, "He'll definitely be a cute guy. When he's born, I'll hold a party to celebrate his arrival. Sherlock, don't refuse my invitation when the time comes."

"Perhaps it's a she," Klein replied with a smile.

Frankly speaking, he was curious to see what kind of state the newly born Snake of Mercury was in.

However, he was also a little afraid and worried. After all, the Snake of Mercury was a Sequence 1 of the Monster pathway related to fate, and it also involved the fight for the position of being a deity. No one could be sure whether the future would be smooth sailing, with peace and bliss.

For Dr. Aaron, I don't know if it was fortune or misfortune... Whether Will Auceptin is kind is one matter, but whether or not the other Snake of Mercury would discover him is another matter... And Will Auceptin hasn't done anything as of now. Informing the Nighthawks now would seem a little cruel. I've always understood wild Beyonders... It's best to just quietly watch from the sidelines and not get involved, or perhaps taking advantage of the situation is the best choice... Maybe I made a mistake in my interpretation and am overthinking things? Perhaps Will Auceptin isn't a Snake of Mercury at all! Perhaps the child Mrs. Aaron is carrying is very normal! Many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind.

"She? That's even better." Aaron said in anticipation.

After some thought, Klein asked another question, "Have you had any nightmares lately?"

"Occasionally, but they were all normal nightmares. There are no longer any nightmares of Will Auceptin anymore. Sherlock, thank you for your guidance," Aaron said earnestly.

No, no, no, that makes it abnormal. As a keyboard warrior, my limited general knowledge of psychology tells me that occasionally dreaming of Will Auceptin would be the natural thing to do. It's a standard response from overstimulation. Since Will had caused you so much trouble and left such a deep impression on you, it would definitely be reflected in your dreams. Therefore, the correct outcome would be to occasionally dream about Will Auceptin, but the dream wouldn't be too clear, to the point of only knowing that something like that had happened without remembering the details... Klein was pretty sure.

At that moment, he heard a rustling sound.

He subconsciously looked outside the hall, only to see the darkness in the air being dispersed by a strong wind, and the thin light-yellow fog was swept away as a result.

The leafless branches swayed back and forth, and the strong gust of wind left a clear trail towards the southeast.

A few seconds later, everything returned to normal.

"It's hard to see such strong winds in Backlund during winter. At least, I don't remember anything like it before." Aaron sighed as he looked out the window.

That's not an ordinary wind... What happened? Klein suppressed his curiosity and made an excuse to go to the bathroom to perform a simple divination, but he failed to obtain any effective revelations.

He temporarily put this matter to the back of his mind and prepared to head to the underground shooting range to practice his shooting.

At that moment, a waiter wearing a red vest came through the warm hall and respectfully said, "Mr. Moriarty, your friend is here for you."

"Who?" Klein asked in surprise.

"Mr. Ikanser Bernard," the red-vested attendant answered.

The deacon who's often forced to "perm his hair"... Why is he suddenly looking for me? Have there been any new discoveries? Klein immediately walked to the reception hall of the club.

Ikanser pressed down the hat which had been pushed up by his fluffy hair, walked over, and said with a lowered voice, "The Mandated Punishers have found Patrick Jason Beria."

"How was he found?" Klein asked, half surprised, half curious.

According to his divination, Jason Beria had always been wearing human skin. His true appearance and aura weren't what they had assumed they were. It was almost impossible for him to be found so easily!

Ikanser surveyed the area and said, "I'm not sure. I just received the news."

He pointed to a small white bird standing on the tree outside the door.

The bird was leisurely cleaning its feathers with its beak.

Before Klein could ask further, Ikanser gave a general account of what had happened.

"The Mandated Punishers found clues and confirmed Jason's location. However, the Devil discovered the danger in advance and managed to

kill two Mandated Punishers and fled before they managed to close in on him. This infuriated the higher-ups of the Church of Storms. As such, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, is currently personally in pursuit. You likely saw a gust of wind just now. It was caused by him. He's the Archbishop of the Church of Storms's Backlund diocese, and he's also one of the Cardinals of the Church of Storms.

It sounds normal, but it also feels weird... According to my theory with Mr. Isengard, this can be also understood as a way for Jason, the Desire Apostle, to draw away High-Sequence Beyonders... Klein asked after some deliberation, "Are you sure that the person discovered is Jason Beria?"

Ikanser's expression instantly turned heavy as he replied with an odd tone, "I'll give it a try," he replied in a strange tone.

He motioned to Klein to follow him out and into a large carriage parked at the side of the street. There were two members of the Machinery Hivemind inside.

Ikanser took a deep breath and took out the strange-patterned silver mirror from a special pocket in his clothes.

After doing the necessary steps, he gloomily said, "Honorable Arrodes, my question is: 'Where is Patrick Jason Beria's current location.'"

The surrounding light suddenly warped, as if they were lights after a rain. A scene rapidly surfaced on the silver mirror.

It was a riverboat with a sail raised. Jason Beria, with his high cheekbones, blue eyes with a gray tint, and neatly combed hair, pressed down his cap, propped up the collar of his coat, and hurried into the cabin.

"He's really trying to escape Backlund! Spellsinger of God seems to be heading towards the dock area..." a female Machinery Hivemind member said in realization.

That's way too easy for him to be exposed, right? Klein was filled with doubt.

Ikanser wasn't concerned with any of this; all his attention was placed on the silver mirror's surface.

This time, there was only the choice of answering. Answering it wrongly or lying meant suffering a terrifying penalty.

Soon, words in blood-red appeared on the mirror:

"If the man you like is covered with lumps; has his skin shed, reducing him only to flesh and blood; or has become a monster, but it is still able to communicate with him, will you still like him?"

What a shameful question... Wait, a man? Klein almost turned his head to look at Ikanser.

Ikanser slowly breathed out and said, "I will, but I will kill him with my own hands."

"Very honest." A new combination of words appeared on the surface of the silver mirror.

...This question and answer game is simply a public hearing... Klein really wanted to cover his face.

He looked at the other two Machinery Hivemind members and saw no abnormalities from them, or perhaps, it should be said that they were pretending to not have any abnormal expressions. He hesitantly said, "I keep feeling that all of this has been too easy. Perhaps that's not the real Jason Beria?"

"But Jason Beria was directed at him." Ikanser was planning to put away the silver mirror.

Klein thought for a few seconds and said after organizing his words, "No, what I truly mean is that we have to abandon any ingrained judgments. What we are looking for is that Desire Apostle, not Jason Beria. The two might not necessarily be the same.

"This is a point that I have to mention as a detective."

...

On King's Avenue, a luxurious carriage left the kingdom's parliament.

The carpeted carriage was furnished with a bed, a sofa, a table, and other furniture, like a mobile room.

Duke Pallas Negan, who was dressed in a dark blue admiral's uniform, was drinking a polished crystal glass of red wine that resembled crimson blood.

As he sampled the wine, he said thoughtfully, "Invite Earl Hall to be my guest tomorrow. I would like to discuss with him about increasing the remuneration of the factory workers and improving their working hours, as well as amending the Poor Law. These are bills he has been pushing hard for recently. He should be very interested. Heh, why would the Church of Evernight suddenly be concerned over such matters?

"When sending the invitation, you can first inform Earl Hall about the topics I wish to discuss. The property restrictions for the elections are necessary and cannot be lowered. Otherwise, those who are in control of a large number of workers will take up more seats. Also, suppress the recent attack on the invalid voting districts..."

The secretary at the side quickly scribbled down Duke Negan's orders.

After he was done, Duke Negan sighed and said, "The reason I'm doing this is also for the sake of the nobles. However, there are more and more useless fellows among us, and there's even quite a number of them who owe money to the tycoons."

At that moment, the carriage didn't turn towards Empress Borough but went straight ahead.

As the greatest property-owning noble apart from the king, Duke Negan had many mistresses, but in the relatively conservative Loen Kingdom, this was something which would leave him vulnerable to his political enemies. Therefore, even as a noble duke, he still had to sneak around when he went to his mistress's place, but this seemed to only give him more pleasure.

Today, he was planning to go to his most beloved mistress of the past two to three years, a young girl who had just turned twenty.

Duke Negan took out a bottle of medicine made of mummy powder and drank it. He couldn't help but touch the accessory hanging from his neck. It was a dark blue thumb-sized conch.

It was a mystical item that the Church of Storms had specially provided after his last assassination attempt by Qilangos. As long as Duke Negan blew on it, the Holy Wind Cathedral's Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake would hear it and lock onto his position.

In order to protect himself, Duke Negan even moved the residences of his mistresses to areas near the Holy Wind Cathedral.

The carriage slowly moved until it reached an extremely luxurious building. At a glance, there was a glass greenhouse filled with bright red roses.

Inside the carriage outside the Quelaag Club.

"The Desire Apostle might not necessarily be Jason Beria? You believe that we might've been misled?" Ikanser didn't scoff, show contempt, or think lightly of what Klein had said. Instead, he began to seriously discuss the problem with him.

Not a bad deacon... However, it could also be due to him frequently using the magic mirror name Arrodes. No matter how bad his temper is, it would eventually be worn out... Klein praised silently and nodded sincerely.

"This is my personal opinion, derived from a cautious standpoint.

"It's very easy to prove it again. Ask the magic mirror of the

Desire Apostle's location, and not of Jason Beria's location."

Ikanser pressed down his hat and said, "Makes sense."

His expression turned serious once again, and his gaze landed on the magic mirror in his palm.

"Deacon Ikanser, if you were to ask for any clues here, the Devil will definitely be able to detect it," Klein reminded them.

"That's right." Ikanser turned his head to the other two members and said, "Continue protecting Mr. Moriarty in secret. Even if the Desire Apostle attacks, the three of you should be able to last for some time. Besides, there's military personnel nearby."

"Yes, Deacon!" the two Machinery Hivemind members answered without hesitation.

Ikanser left at once, heading for where the Nighthawks were, which was around Isengard Stanton.

With the Spellsinger of God stirred, and the Sealed Artifact of the Church of Goddess Church out in force... if the Desire Apostle were to really do anything, it would definitely be this afternoon... Let's hope that there's enough time and that the magic mirror will give him the correct answer... But this way, I won't have a chance to get involved,

and I won't be able to personally see the Devil that has harmed all of us die, and I won't have access to his suitcase full of money, gold bars, gold coins, and jewelry... Klein looked at the Ikanser's departing back and sighed in disappointment.

However, his mood soon recovered.

That's good too. At the very least I won't have to take any risks and be able to safely get out of this predicament.

Furthermore, the Machinery Hivemind definitely won't treat me unfairly. If I were to succeed, my opinions and suggestions definitely would've played an important role. Furthermore, I'm a believer of the God of Steam and Machinery, so it's likely I'll receive some of the spoils... Considering the premise of 50,000 pounds, it shouldn't be too small...

Klein couldn't help but feel a bit regretful as he thought of this.

But he wouldn't risk himself by getting involved.

A Magician never performs unprepared!

It happened too quickly and hastily, without giving me any time to plan at all... Klein nodded at the two Machinery Hivemind members, got out of the carriage, and returned to the Quelaag Club, where he had no trouble getting the attendant to allocate him a break room.

...

Hillston Borough. In Isengard Stanton's living room.

Leonard Mitchell combed some of his slightly unruly black hair. In accordance with Captain Soest's instructions and the help of the other Nighthawks, he barely managed to put on the silver armor, which was stained with large amounts of blood.

He pulled down his visor and hid his green eyes in the darkness. Then he extended his left hand, which was covered by a silver metal gauntlet, and held the magic mirror Ikanser handed him.

Within the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, the code name of the silver mirror was 2-111.

“It’s only a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact?” Soest asked, slightly surprised.

Ikanser nodded.

“Yes, it’s not that dangerous.”

As he said that, he suddenly sounded like he was gritting his teeth.

“That is to say that it’s other aspects have reached the standards of a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact?” Soest asked in thought.

Ikanser warily glanced at him.

“Only in certain aspects.”

He refused to divulge any more information.

At this moment, Leonard used his right hand to gently stroke the surface of the silver mirror. The living room suddenly became quiet.

After repeating it three times, he said in a deep voice, “Honorable

Arrodes, my question is: ‘Where is the current location of the Desire Apostle who assaulted Isengard Stanton?’”

The entire house turned dark as though a dark cloud had passed by.

The surface of the silver mirror glowed with an aqueous light, and a blurry image quickly formed—it was a luxurious villa with a large garden in front of the window.

In the center of the garden, there was a glass greenhouse, with bright red roses blooming inside.

Above the glass greenhouse, the pale sun could still be seen behind the thin fog.

“It’s in Backlund!” Isengard Stanton immediately derived the location of the scene based on the angle of the view and the position of the sun in the sky.

“This is completely different from the answer when we asked about Jason Beria! We’ve been tricked!” Ikanser said in a deep voice.

Soul Assurer Soest exhaled and said, “How crafty.

“Then, who’s the Jason Beria that Spellsinger of God is chasing?

“Sigh, there’s no time for discussion. We need to narrow down the general location of the presented scene. Then, we’ll immediately take action. I suspect that the Desire Apostle is planning to cause a huge incident!”

At this point, the silver mirror known as Arrodes had dissipated the scene, replacing it with words.

It required Leonard Mitchell to answer a question, and if he lied or refused to answer, he would be severely punished.

For some baffling reason, Leonard felt a little nervous. He put away his usual frivolous attitude and quietly waited for the question.

A few seconds later, he saw the blood-red words change, taking shape one by one.

“On your body, is there something attached...”

Halfway through the question, Leonard’s pupils rapidly contracted. His back tensed up, and a cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

If it wasn’t for him being concealed by the blood-stained silver armor, the others would’ve already noticed his abnormality.

Right at this moment, his left palm inexplicably trembled.

The silver magic mirror suddenly trembled, and the scarlet words were strangely tainted with a tint of green. If one didn’t keep staring at the mirror with rapt attention, it would be difficult for others to discover that the color of the mirror had slightly changed.

The words continued warping, changing the question to: “On your body, is there a scar which you cannot tell others?”

“Yes, that scar resides in my memory,” Leonard answered stably, but his body inside the blood-stained silver armor felt a sense of exhaustion from suddenly relaxing a high tension.

This mirror is too dangerous... It actually noticed it! Thankfully, Old Man has recovered a bit after such a long time... he thought; his lips were dry.

Soest took out his pocket watch, pressed it open to take a look, and said to Leonard, who was inside the blood-stained silver armor.

“There’s still time, you’ll be in charge of the rest of the operation!”

“Yes, Captain Soest.” Leonard let out a secret sigh.

...

Dock area, Backlund Shipyard.

Patrick Jason Beria entered a cabin he had reserved in advance.

He looked out of the window and observed the sky filled with fog as he silently counted the time.

After a while, he quickly took off his hat and clothes. Then, with a tug of his hand, he pulled off the outer layer of human skin!

Under the human skin was a beautiful woman in her early thirties with a profound look in her eyes. She wasn’t the man with brown hair and brown eyes whom Klein had seen during the dream divination!

The woman took out some clothes and put them on methodically, quickly becoming an absolutely charming woman.

Finally, she pulled out a fist-sized stone figurine from the bottom of a suitcase and wrapped it tightly with the peeled off skin before tying a dead knot.

Having done all this, the riverboat was already some distance away. She opened the window and threw Patrick Jason’s skin along with the stone figurine into the river.

Plop!

The human skin that was tied to the heavy object quickly sank.

The woman clapped her hands and closed the window. Carrying the suitcase, she changed to a different cabin she had prepared.

Then, she sat down at the window of the new cabin, propped up her elbows, her face in her hands, and looked out leisurely.

After an unknown period of time, she saw a strong gust of wind blowing in the air, dispersing the thin fog.

The corners of her lips curled up into a brilliant smile.

...

In a luxurious villa not far from the Holy Wind Cathedral in Cherwood Borough.

The bloated, blue-eyed Pallas Negan bear hugged his approaching mistress, a beautiful young girl with a bit of innocence on her face.

There were two people following him. One of them was a middle-aged man wearing a black tailcoat. He had brown hair and blue eyes, but he didn't wear an expression. He was a Beyonder guard provided by the Church of Storms, a Sequence 6 Wind-blessed.

The other person was Duke Negan's secretary.

He was a thin blond young man with delicate features, looking refined and reserved. His biggest flaw was his receding hairline which didn't match his age.

As for the other guards, or security personnel, they were spread out outside the house.

On the second floor, the Wind-blessed entered the bedroom before Duke Negan for a quick inspection. Meanwhile, Duke Negan's secretary was in charge of searching the surrounding rooms.

After confirming that there were no problems, they nodded at Duke Negan, indicating that he could continue.

"My roused up feelings have almost calmed down," Duke Negan said half-jokingly.

His mistress happily responded, "Then we can have a nice chat. I'd like to hear about your time at sea."

"I hope you'll eventually have the energy to do so." Duke Negan carried his mistress into the bedroom and closed the door behind him with his heel.

His secretary and the Wind-blessed entered the rooms on either side of him, not relaxing in the slightest.

In the attic of this house.

A man in a dark overcoat sat on an old chair, his eyes half closed. It was unknown what he was trying to sense, but he would occasionally smile and shake his head.

His brown hair was slightly curled, and his brown eyes were cold. It was the same person that Klein had seen in the dream divination! The difference was that there was one fewer suitcase by his feet.

“How vigorous, and what intense desire... This doesn’t match my judgment of him. It looks like he took some medicine... That just works so well for me... Heh heh, how could they possibly imagine that Patrick Jason Beria is actually two people...” The man tilted his face up slightly as if he was intoxicated.

“It’s almost time... Right now!”

His right hand suddenly clenched, as if he was tightly clutching someone’s heart!

Beyond the window, the glass greenhouse reflected the pale light of the sun, and the bright roses stood out even in the thin fog.

In the bedroom, Duke Negan seemed to have recovered the feeling of following his father and elders around the vast lands when he was young, riding a horse, using a hound, and chasing a wild beast.

Finally, he climaxed and the surroundings seemed to become abnormally quiet.

At this moment, his mind suddenly buzzed once. He felt as if the pleasure and comfort he was feeling had suddenly exploded one after another. It continued exploding without end or limit, again and again.

Duke Negan's waist kept shaking, and his eyes were blank, his brain having lost its train of thought.

His heart began to beat violently in an unbearable manner, like a steam boiler whose pressure had gone beyond its limits. It could blow up at any time, and hot steam could gush out at any moment.

If it were an ordinary person or a Beyonder who wasn't physically strong, they would've suffered a heart attack, a massive cerebral hemorrhage, and die on the spot. But Duke Negan ultimately managed to ride through the attack. Only his eyes were unfocused, and saliva was flowing out the corner of his mouth before he weakly slumped onto his mistress.

The Wind-blessed and the duke's secretary, who were onguard on both sides of the room, simultaneously sensed the strange and mysterious smell of spirituality. The former's body was suddenly surrounded by a violent wind, sweeping him towards the wall, and with a clang, a large hole was blown through the wall as he stepped into the bedroom.

The secretary went straight to the source of the mystery—the attic of the house!

Along the way, he didn't evade or dodge, but the decorative vases and other objects in the corridor seemed to have found lives of their own and avoided him in ingenious ways.

As he ran up the stairs to the attic, the wooden floorboards seemed to rise, as if to give him a hand.

In just three or four seconds, the refined, handsome, blond young man entered the attic and saw a figure sitting on an old chair.

The figure was covered in a thick black liquid, just like the gathering of all the ugly desires and intense feelings in the depths of a human's heart. It was the greed of willing to sell and hang oneself by the ropes, the hunger that wouldn't even spare one's own kind, and a lust without limits.

This was a devil walking the earth!

The skinny secretary's expression didn't change, nor did he attack directly. Instead, he looked at the other party, reached behind him, and politely closed the door.

Bam!

The wooden door of the attic was closed.

The entire room suddenly felt like it had been completely sealed, as if one could never leave the room unless effort was put in to crack the seal.

At this moment, the concept of "closing the door and sealing the room" seemed to have been changed to "seal this place, isolate the outside from the inside!"

The Desire Apostle moved. His body expanded and grew a pair of huge bat wings that emitted light blue tongues of flames.

One by one, fireballs that exuded a strong sulfurous smell were formed, and they bombarded Duke Negan's blond secretary.

The secretary reached out with his white-gloved left hand and clenched it while half-turning his wrist.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The fireballs stopped following the principle of straight or parabolic paths as they scattered in every direction in a sudden outburst of chaos, like the irregular movement of tiny particles suggested by a botanist

[1]. Some of them hit the wall, some hit the ceiling, some fell beside the weak-looking secretary, and some fell backward, almost wounding the Desire Apostle himself.

The entire attic was a mess, with traces of destruction and char everywhere, and the house even shook a few times.

However, the mysterious power that was “sealed” in here, or the rules that had been tampered with, had yet been destroyed. The surrounding walls, the old wooden door, and the dusty roof appeared to be on the verge of collapsing, but it remained intact.

The Desire Apostle wasn’t frustrated by the failure of his previous attempt, nor was he flustered that he couldn’t control his enemy or catalyze him into a frenzy, due to his calmness and restrained desires. His coffee-brown eyes suddenly lit up like lava as he took the form of the blond secretary. He spat out a word in the Devil language, one filled with foulness and filth: “Die!”

Almost at the same time, the pupils under the secretary’s goldenrimmed glasses constricted. He opened his left fist and aimed at the Desire Apostle with the palm of his hand.

Suddenly, his figure split into two. One was refined and skinny like his actual self. The other was a shadow covered by a black liquid of “desire.” The two quickly alternated, overlapping with each other at times.

“Die!”

The words said in the Language of Foulness echoed in the attic as the secretary let out a low grunt and took two steps back.

Following that, the split silhouette dissipated, and large swaths of rusted red marks appeared on his face, as though he had turned into a man of iron that had been left in a humid area for years.

Cough! Cough! Cough! He coughed violently, spitting out blobs of rusted blood that had congealed into clumps.

The marks on his body began to slowly peel off.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

The Desire Apostle was also coughing, coughing out blood that had clumped and turned to rust. The viscous black liquid covering his entire body suddenly became much thinner.

The Language of Foulness seemed to have half of its effects transferred to him by Duke Negan's secretary!

...

In the bedroom.

The Wind-blessed helped Duke Negan up and kicked the beautiful mistress to the other side in case she was an accomplice of the assailant.

The reason why he didn't help the secretary was because he knew he had only one responsibility—to protect Duke Negan!

And in similar situations, one had to be wary of more than one enemy!

At this point, Duke Negan had somewhat recovered a little, he was rather strong, but his limbs still felt weak. His body felt empty and his mind was sluggish. He was completely unable to use his Beyonder powers.

He motioned to the Wind-blessed to remove the conch necklace from his neck and brought the item to his lips.

Duke Negan took a deep breath and blew into the small conch which was covered in strange patterns.

Splash!

The low and deep sound of the tide was heard as it rushed towards the Holy Wind Cathedral.

"With His Grace's speed, he should be able to arrive very soon!" The Wind-blessed first reassured him, and then with Duke Negan on his back, he went to the window and leaped down.

He wanted to meet up with the duke's guards outside; there were two or three Low-Sequence Beyonders among them.

Duke Negan gasped for breath and said, "Catch him, make sure to catch him alive, or with a Spirit Body...

“I want to know who it is!”

He had suffered an assassination attempt from Pirate Admiral Qilangos the last time, and now, it was an unknown Sequence 5 expert. Duke Negan was very aware that he hadn’t developed any irredeemable grudges with anyone recently, as such, he was especially angry and resentful.

He wanted to find the mastermind and use all the resources at his disposal to tear the mastermind apart!

The premise of all this was that he could find clues from the assassin.

Seven or eight seconds later, most of the duke’s guards surged forward, surrounding Pallas Negan and the Wind-blessed in the middle as they gathered in front of the garden.

“Wait here and be on guard against the enemy,” the Windblessed gave the order.

Under normal circumstances, he had to protect the duke and evacuate from the assassination grounds as quickly as possible and rush to the safety of the Holy Wind Cathedral. However, he wasn’t sure if there were any other enemies, and he was afraid of being ambushed en route. He was afraid of missing the reinforcements from Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, and ending up being placed in a more perilous situation.

One second, two seconds, three seconds... Time kept flowing by as the house shook from time to time, and the battle inside seemed to have reached its climax.

“Why is the Archbishop not here yet?” the panting Duke Negan asked in a slightly panicked voice.

With the archbishop’s flying speed, he should’ve arrived very quickly. However, there weren’t any signs of the thin fog being scattered in the direction of the Holy Wind Cathedral.

On high alert, the Wind-blessed hesitantly said, “Perhaps, perhaps the Archbishop, the Archbishop...”

He eventually failed to mention the possibility that the Archbishop wasn’t in the Holy Wind Cathedral.

At that moment, the beautiful mistress of Duke Negan came to the window of the bedroom on the second floor, her eyes filled with a lost and beautiful smile.

Then, she jumped down, deliberately hitting her head on the concrete floor.

Bam!

After producing a jarring sound, there were quite a few cracks on her beautiful head, and blood began to flow out.

She rolled a few times, weakly, until she was facing up.

Her eyes had lost all focus, and her frozen expression was one of madness and fear.

Seeing this scene, many members of the duke's guards couldn't help but feel horrified.

Even Duke Negan himself felt that his emotions were on the verge of collapse when Archbishop Snake didn't arrive.

"Let's go! Let's get out of here!" he weakly called out on instinct.

Just as the Wind-blessed was rejoicing over not being softhearted when kicking the mistress away—otherwise, the duke would've been killed on the spot—he heard a command filled with horror. His heart suddenly skipped a beat.

Inside the attic, the Desire Apostle, who was in the middle of a fierce battle, suddenly liquefied and turned into countless black shadows, jumping up and down on the ground.

After dodging the blond secretary's attack, he rematerialized in another direction.

Then, he looked at the enemy, raised his right arm, and slightly curled the corners of his mouth.

"No!" The blond secretary's eyes reddened.

All of a sudden, the Desire Apostle clenched his fist.

Outside the luxurious house, Duke Negan's horror erupted. It shot straight to his brain and into his veins, blanketing all his nerves.

He heard the sound of something shattering and felt a warm sensation at the back of his head.

At the same time, several members of the duke's guards became flustered and panicked. They all raised their custom revolvers or rifles in their hands and started shooting randomly towards the center.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Wind-blessed was the first to reach out and grab Duke Negan. He rolled to the ground, and a formless wind as sharp as knives appeared out of thin air, slicing through the throats of the guards.

Splat. Splat. The guards clutched at their throats, slowly falling to the ground in a pool of fresh blood. Duke Negan's body twitched a few times, but then it stopped moving.

He was robbed of his life by his own horror.

If he hadn't been a Sequence 6 Beyonder, then his horror might've even dismembered him.

Of course, if he hadn't become extremely weak, then he wouldn't have possessed such intense emotions. And even if he had these emotions, then he wouldn't have directly died as a result of this.

But there were no "ifs" in this world, Pallas Negan—the leader of the Conservative Party, the noble with the largest land apart from the king, the elder brother of the current Prime Minister, a Sequence 6 Beyonder, and a truly important figure— was dead.

The roses in the nearby glass greenhouse were still in full bloom.

In the attic, the blond secretary seemed to sense something and could no longer control his emotions.

As a result, his mind went blank, and he anxiously ran outside, automatically opening the door to the sealed room.

Two seconds later, he snapped to his senses and turned around again. However, the figure that was covered by the black liquid and the suitcase in the corner had disappeared.

...

The Desire Apostle quickly left the villa, evacuating from the scene based on a predetermined route.

It was at this moment that a thick sea of blood seemed to appear before his eyes.

---

1. Brownian motion as suggested by botanist Robert Brown.

The Desire Apostle, who had once worn Patrick Jason's skin, stopped in his tracks and looked around in bewilderment.

Only now did he vaguely realize that danger was approaching.

He was at the edge of a garden where the grass had withered due to winter and was revealing dark brown soil.

On the right side of the street, there weren't many pedestrians on the weekday afternoon. At this moment, there were only a few people passing by, but they didn't notice anything out of the ordinary.

Suddenly, a silver glint appeared in the eyes of the Desire Apostle, and a person decked out in full body armor emerged from the other side of the garden.

The armor was stained with congealed blood, diagonally from its left shoulder all the way down. It exuded a bewitching beauty and appeared to be extremely heavy. Every step it took slightly shook the ground.

Upon seeing this blood-stained silver armor, the Desire Apostle felt as if he couldn't breathe properly, as if he had met his most terrifying nemesis.

How are they here so quickly? They saw through my ruse so quickly? The Desire Apostle regained his calm and coldbloodedness, fully focused on sensing the emotions and desires of the Beyonder inside the blood-stained silver armor.

However, to his despair, the silver armor completely blocked his Beyonder powers.

It was as if he had touched a rock, a piece of cold armor which had no one in it!

The Desire Apostle had no choice but to raise his right hand, spreading out his giant bat wings and bringing with it some blue flames that rapidly condensed.

At that moment, a silver light flashed from his right palm, and his thumb fell to the ground. The wound was extremely clean.

Amidst swooshing sounds and a flash of silver light, the remaining nine fingers of the Desire Apostle were severed. The suitcase he was carrying also fell to the ground with a thud.

The Desire Apostle's pupils immediately contracted to a needle point, and he flapped the pair of huge bat wings on his back to escape in another direction.

The shadow under his feet shrank back without anyone realizing it, hiding in one spot.

The Desire Apostle had only taken two steps when countless silver lights burst out from his body like blooming fireworks.

The thick black liquid that covered his body splashed to the ground like raindrops. His forearm, arm, shoulders, ribs, neck, and other parts of his body broke off and smoothly slid downwards.

Splat. Splat. Splat. The pale, blood-stained intestines of the Desire Apostle splashed to the ground, along with his squirming stomach and his beating heart which had yet to cease.

The place where he stood was where the blood was the thickest. The further he went, the more splatted it looked, which when put together, they formed a beautiful flower of death.

A Sequence 5 expert, a Desire Apostle who had just completed an impossible assassination, was dismembered without any resistance.

This was a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact.

This was the Sealed Artifact that had caused over a hundred thousand people to lose their lives—Sealed Artifact 1-42!

Dressed in that terrifying-looking armor, Leonard Mitchell struggled to take two steps forward, sized up the dismembered body on the ground, and raised his voice.

"He's not completely dead yet!"

He paused for a moment and then added, "Different Devils have different characteristics. This Desire Apostle is a shadow-shifter. He's just abandoned his own body, only leaving a shadow behind."

While Soul Assurer Soest instructed a number of Nighthawks and members of the Machinery Hivemind to "keep ordinary people at bay," he surveyed the scene and listened to Leonard.

He took out his pocket watch and opened it. He asked with a serious expression, "There's only ten minutes left, is it enough? Don't force it!"

"No problem! 1-42 has locked onto him. I can sense its excitement," Leonard said without hesitation.

Soest spread his red-gloved fingers and said to the other Nighthawks, "Bring hot water with you and follow Leonard closely. Once there are any problem, switch with him immediately and dig a 'bathtub' on the spot!

"Also, leave marks. The other team members and I will quickly catch up."

Tap. Tap. Tap. The blood-stained silver armor began running in pursuit. Despite looking heavy, it was incredulously fast.

Soest watched as the few Red Gloves left before turning to look at Ikanser.

"Deacon Bernard, take the rest of the Machinery Hivemind members to that house. Watch the duke's guards and anyone else that's alive at the scene."

"Watch?" Ikanser subconsciously returned with a question.

Soest nodded seriously and said, "How can the Desire Apostle be able to determine that the duke would be coming to this house today, to the point of precisely pinpointing the time, and then perfectly luring the Spellsinger of God away?"

Ikanser was instantly enlightened.

"Are you saying that a member of the Duke's guards or someone trusted by him is a partner of the Desire Apostle?"

Otherwise, there was no way that his timing could be that perfect!

The so-called “operation” wouldn’t have any chance of success otherwise!

“It can only be said that this is the most probable cause. We cannot eliminate the assumption that the Desire Apostle has a powerful clairvoyant.” Soest didn’t continue as he led a second batch of Nighthawks and followed the marks to reinforce the teammates up ahead.

With a calm face, he led the rest of the Machinery Hivemind back to the house of the Duke’s mistress.

He looked up at the pale sun behind the thin fog and knew that the situation in the whole of Backlund, and even the whole of the Loen Kingdom, or even the world would change because of what had happened today.

...

In the darkness of the sewers, a shadow was advancing rapidly in a particular direction while clinging to the bottom of the stone wall.

He wanted to take advantage of the fact that the blood-stained armor was tall and heavy, making it inconvenient for him to move around in certain narrow areas of the sewers; thus, allowing him to shake him off his tail!

Every time the shadow moved a certain distance forward, it would stop, frozen in place.

His pitch-black surface continued to swell and solidify as if it was trying to produce new flesh and blood, but due to a lack of materials, it failed miserably.

The Desire Apostle let out a painful gasp, feeling that he could lose control at any moment in this state.

After a short breather, he continued to run for his life, unable to afford the time to decrease the threat of the problem he faced. He was also afraid that the terrifying blood-stained silver armor would silently catch up with him.

...

At the Quelaag Club, Klein entered the lounge and took the newspapers to the toilet.

He was afraid that the Desire Apostle would flee in advance, leaving potential danger for himself, Isengard Stanton, Kaslana, and the innocent private detectives. Therefore, he planned on heading above the gray fog to perform another divination to confirm the Desire Apostle's present situation and, thus, adopt a targeted strategy.

After repeating the previous process of replacing himself with a paper figurine, he sat in the seat of The Fool, conjuring Jason Beria's handkerchief and trying to divine his current location.

In the dusky dream world, Klein saw the dark sewers. He saw a living shadow and how his body seemingly appeared to fill itself with flesh and blood, only to constantly fail, as well as tiny black dust that kept being shed from his body.

The scene climbed higher and arrived aboveground, revealing a towering cathedral.

Holy Wind Cathedral... Klein opened his closed eyes and understood the situation of the Desire Apostle.

He hasn't been caught yet, but he seems to be heavily injured. His condition is in terrible shape and it's filled with abnormalities!

His suitcase is gone too... It must've been dropped when he was injured... Klein thought for a moment. Using divination, he recalled the map of Backlund and made it appear before his eyes. Similarly, he came up with a rough layout of Backlund's sewers.

Having previously made full use of the sewer system, he had always been gathering similar information such as this. The main focus was on East Borough, the Backlund Bridge area, and the area where he was located in, Cherwood Borough. After some hard work, he had long completed the first stage of his plan of understanding the main layout of the sewer network. To have a more in-depth understanding of it would require an extremely long period of persistence. When the time came, Klein even thought of infiltrating Backlund's municipal hall and directly sneak a peek at the design prints.

According to the two maps and the scene seen in the dream divination, Klein noticed that the Desire Apostle, Beria, hadn't fled in the direction of the Tussock River. Instead, he had taken the opposite route to Hillston Borough, as if he wanted to pass through and enter the artificial lake in Empress Borough.

In other words, he's getting closer and closer to me... Klein's mind stirred as he suddenly had an idea.

Although I'm not sure which sewer he'll pass through, I can make a judgment via divination... He's heavily injured and in a very strange state. His interference in this aspect has turned extremely weak. At close distances, it's not like I can't find him. After all, I've seen what he really looks like, and I have a grasp of his aura... When it comes to finding people, I'm a professional... I have to do something; I can't let him escape just like that! There's still time! After confirming the degree of danger, Klein made up his mind and returned to the real world.

He took out the candle, quickly set up a ritual, summoned himself, and responded to himself.

Not long after, there was a figure in black armor, wearing a black crown, and a cloak of the same color in the bathroom. It was Klein in his Spirit Body state while carrying the Black Emperor card.

He also "included" mystical items such as the Sun Brooch and Biological Poison Bottle, so as to ensure success.

Then, he disappeared into the air and left the Quelaag Club in another direction.

The current Klein could fly, so he was very fast, but he couldn't cause any wind, because he was a Spirit Body.

He "scraped" past a tree and took away a dead branch.

Having seen Jason Beria's actual appearance before, together with his own memory and the handkerchief as a medium, Klein, combined with the layout map and the dowsing rod divination, quickly determined the sewer areas that Jason had passed.

After entering the pitch-black and fetid area, Klein used his maximum speed to pass through a large number of narrow areas and entered a relatively spacious area.

The dark river flowed, and a mixed smell filled the air. He would occasionally change his direction and chase after Jason Beria.

...

The Desire Apostle nearly lost control again. He stopped and pressed himself against the damp walls and cold pipes, trying hard to rein in his bloodlust and his desire to kill.

Pant. Pant. The thin shadow started to move.

At this moment, he suddenly turned his head to look at the spot he had just passed.

The pitch-black armor and the black crown first entered his “eyes,” outlining an extremely imposing figure.

Behind the figure, the weightless cloak lightly swayed as he moved forward.

...

“It’s nearby!”

A body of heavy silver armor stained in blood went through the entrance and climbed down to the sewers.

The murky river in the sewers flowed beneath the unlit surroundings. If a normal person walked in here, then he would have to carry a lantern in order to see the necessary details of the situation clearly.

However, to Klein, who was in his Spirit Body state, this wasn't an obstacle. Everything around him had long been reflected in his "eyes."

Therefore, when the Desire Apostle discovered him, he also discovered the Desire Apostle.

He didn't speak, nor did he hesitate. He opened his mouth and let out a soundless screech.

This was an attack that directly damaged the soul!

The Desire Apostle suddenly stopped moving, as if someone had delivered a heavy blow to him.

Large patches of shadow-like black substances fell off his body, as though he was shaking off the snowflakes that had been tainted with the deepest desires.

In that instant, the Desire Apostle, who was already severely injured, almost fainted.

Without the support of his physical body, he was like a candlelight in the middle of a raging wind, swaying back and forth, on the verge of being extinguished at any moment.

His shadow suddenly dispersed, turning into a pitch-black liquid that flowed in all directions, making it impossible to know which shadow to pursue.

At that moment, a shadow suddenly jumped out from the darkness behind Klein, and it suddenly rushed forward!

The black liquid, that could no longer be considered sticky, was merely a tool used by the Desire Apostle to confuse and make it easier for him to launch a surprise attack!

Klein didn't seem to react at all, allowing the shadow to lunge onto him.

However, the Desire Apostle suddenly shivered, as if he had touched the coldest and chilliest object possible.

The shadow rapidly slowed down, as if it had been "frozen" stiff.

He knew that wraiths and shadows came with freezing effects, but he didn't expect that the fellow wearing the Black Emperor's crown would have such an influence on a Spirit Body like him.

This was a case of being completely suppressed when it came to their lives' natural order!

Klein had expected such an outcome. He half turned his body, stretched out his right hand and placed it on the head of the stiff shadow.

Then, the dark golden Sun Brooch, which was concealed by the black armor, flashed with a faint light.

The Desire Apostle sensed the danger and could perceive his imminent doom. He tried to resist but was temporarily powerless.

A ray of pure and holy light appeared out of nowhere and landed on the shadow's head, enveloping his body.

The surroundings were suddenly illuminated as the black shadow struggled with all its might but didn't stop evaporating. In just a blink of an eye, it had become abnormally thin, and its spirituality was filled with the radiance of the blazing sun and cries of indignation.

Klein didn't give him a chance to catch his breath, and he summoned another pure and bright Holy Light.

The feeling of daylight lasted for two seconds before the Desire Apostle fell to the ground, losing all signs of life.

His body remained in his shadow state, thin as though it had no density.

This Sequence 5 expert who had just assassinated a duke had died just like that. He didn't even have the time to pass on his last words.

At the same time, Klein saw that the deceased's spirit was on the verge of dissipating after suffering the blows.

The Beyonder characteristic will take a while to appear... Should I mimic Miss Sharron by possessing the shadow and speeding up the

process... But I don't know how... Klein began considering what to do next.

Suddenly, he felt the ground tremble slightly.

Relying on his spiritual intuition, he looked back at the place where he had passed by before.

A tall, heavy silver armor was rushing over. Diagonally down from the left shoulder, it was stained with a large amount of solidified blood.

Sealed Artifact 1-42... Klein's heart tightened. Without any hesitation, he wrapped the spirit of the Desire Apostle within him and ended the summoning.

His original plan was that as long as the official Beyonders arrived, he would "return" immediately even if he didn't manage to finish off the Desire Apostle, handing over the rest to them.

The Red Glove in the blood-stained silver armor only saw a silhouette wearing a black crown and a similarly colored cloak before it disappeared without a trace.

He narrowed his eyes, carefully examining the spot where the man had just been, and found the Desire Apostle who had lost his life.

"Clearing clues and destroying evidence?" he said in a low voice.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The Red Gloves who were behind him arrived one after the other.

...

After returning above the gray fog, Klein wasn't in a hurry to channel the spirit. Instead, he directly left the mysterious space and returned to his body in the real world.

He skillfully packed up the ritual items like the candles, and soon, the last traces were removed.

After doing all of this, he once again created a double. He took four steps counterclockwise and arrived at the ancient palace above the gray fog.

Here he could communicate directly with a remnant spirit, as a real Spirit Medium could do, without having to pray to anyone or use the help of a ritual. He had confirmed that when he communicated with Marionettist Rosago's spirit.

Considering that the spirit of the Desire Apostle had been purified and might dissipate at any moment, Klein prepared himself to ask the relatively more important information.

As for the potion formula for the Devil pathway, he planned to consider it only at the end. In any case, even if he obtained it, he didn't plan on selling it, lest he would nurture a few cold-blooded serial murderers.

Looking at the Desire Apostle with brown hair and brown, blank eyes, Klein emanated his spirituality and asked, "What were you plotting?"

The Desire Apostle's connection had been completely severed off from the outside world by the gray fog and could only reply in a muddled voice, "Assassinate Duke Negan."

Duke Negan... Him again? Who wants him dead so much? Klein was stunned as he asked, "Did it succeed?"

"Yes," the Desire Apostle answered calmly without giving any additional descriptions.

In this state, he only replied to whatever he was asked.

Poor Duke Negan, the Lord of Storms wasn't able to protect you... Klein gestured the sign of the crimson moon on his chest.

He didn't attempt to understand the details and directly asked, "Who instigated you to do so?"

Was it the organization that had commissioned Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos? Klein recalled the assassination attempt.

The Desire Apostle calmly said, "An organization, the most secret and ancient organization, most Beyonders don't know of its existence. Its members are said to have important figures in various fields, maybe the higher-ups of the various churches and militaries of different nations."

Sounds familiar... Could it be that secret organization which Emperor Roselle joined, the ancient organization that wields the second Blasphemy Slate? Klein's mind stirred as he asked, "What kind of reward did they promise you, that you would be willing

to give up your identity of more than ten years?"

The Desire Apostle replied in a slightly changed voice, "A Card of Blasphemy, the Abyss card!"

A Card of Blasphemy? The Abyss card, one of Roselle's twenty-two Cards of Blasphemy! This most likely corresponded to the Devil pathway. It's no wonder that the Desire Apostle was willing to sacrifice everything that he had accumulated over the past ten years just for this... In it lies the hope for him to become a HighSequence Beyonder!

The reward is much more valuable than the mission!

However, it's unlikely that Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos would be attracted by such a reward, unless... unless that organization has another Card of Blasphemy or some other item...

If it's really the mysterious organization which Roselle joined, finding a few Cards of Blasphemy is quite normal... Even if they don't, they still possess the Blasphemy Slate...

Klein was alarmed at first before asking in confusion, "Why do they want Duke Negan dead?"

The spirit of the Desire Apostle thinned significantly again, and he said in a hollow voice, "I don't know. All I did was consider taking the mission or not."

"Then, have you heard anything?" Klein pressed.

The Desire Apostle remained in the same unperturbed state.

"I have heard that their purpose is the resurrection or awakening of the Creator.

"They interfere with the progress of history, making it fit their needs, in order to achieve their goals at a certain point in time.

“If the trend of the times aren’t as they expect, then they will try their best to reverse it.

“Other than that, they just quietly watch from the sidelines, apathetic. Perhaps they wouldn’t act or entrust something even once every few decades or centuries...”

A secret organization in the true sense of the word... It’s consistent with Roselle’s description of the powerful faction that secretly manipulates the world... It also seems related to the original Creator... Seeing that the Spirit Body of the Desire Apostle was about to disappear, Klein quickly asked, “What is the name of that organization? How can they be contacted?”

The Desire Apostle looked ahead emotionlessly, his figure quickly disintegrating.

Before he disappeared completely, he answered the question, “They are called the... “Twilight Hermit Order.”

...

Inside the house with the glass greenhouse.

The thin secretary with the gold-rimmed glasses and white gloves sat with a sullen face and a look of deep grief.

“What’s your name? What Sequence are you? Which Beyonder pathway are you from?” Deacon Ikanser asked solemnly.

The blond secretary replied slowly in a deep voice, “Lockhart Siakam, Sequence 5, as for which Beyonder pathway I’m from, you can apply for access to my records from MI9.”

“Alright.” Ikanser then asked, “Does the duke come here at a fixed time every week?”

“No, he doesn’t like to work according to a schedule, especially after the assassination attempt by Qilangos. Before today, no one knew that he would be here today, and I only heard about it in the morning at parliament,” Lockhart Siakam replied seriously.

Ikanser thought and asked, “If there’s a spy amongst you, who do you think he is, and who do you suspect?”

Lockhart thought about it for a few seconds, then he shook his head.

Following that, Ikanser asked for details of the battle and got a rough idea of the process.

He saw that Lockhart was pale and badly hurt; hence, he politely rose to check on the rest of the duke's guards.

After watching the deacon of the Machinery Hivemind leave, Lockhart took a deep breath and trudged over to Duke Negan's corpse.

The great noble was no longer naked like before, but the remnants of terror still remained on his face.

After looking deeply at Duke Negan's corpse, Lockhart murmured sadly, "I'm sorry."

At this moment, with his back facing everyone, the corners of his mouth slightly curled up.

He calmly added inwardly, "This is the choice of the times..."

Chapter 428: The Scapegoat

West Borough, 9 Hope Street, the Prime Minister's residence.

Aguesid Negan stood behind a large table and looked at Earl Hall with a serious expression.

"Lord Hall, my secretary should've briefed you on what has happened. You're the first noble that I've thought of at this moment."

The important member of the Conservative Party, who was presently Prime Minister of the Cabinet, looked like he had aged considerably. His tall, thin figure leaned forward as if unable to bear the bad news, to the point of needing to prop himself up on the table with both hands.

But his eyes were still sharp and his attitude calm.

Earl Hall, who had a beautiful mustache, sighed and said, "I'm sorry to hear this piece of news. It has shocked me greatly. I was thinking of visiting His Grace in a few days to discuss the bill that we're all very concerned about, but who would've known that he would be attacked..."

Having lost the handsome appearance of his youth due to his deep smile lines and the fattening state of his body, he first expressed his condolences, grief, and empathy, then he restrained his emotions and said, "His Grace is already dead. Compared to crying and being angry, we need to be more careful and calm. Only by doing this can we handle the aftermath and prevent this heavy steam train of the Kingdom from derailing." "This is also the reason why I came to you immediately. The other nobles will only call upon their gods, trembling in fear, and express how unacceptable this is. They will want the murderer to be severely punished and the mastermind found. From their point of view, even the Duke who was heavily protected could be assassinated, then what about them?" Prime Minister Aguesid said in a heavy voice. "It's a perfectly natural and understandable reaction, but it's not the reaction we need."

Earl Hall nodded and asked, "Who's the murderer? What was the motive?"

“A Devil who was disguised as a banker for more than a decade, a true Devil. By the way, your Varvat Bank just acquired his business,” Aguesid said, his tone unchanged.

“Patrick Jason?” Earl Hall immediately remembered the man’s name.

He was the one who approved the acquisition of the bank.

Without reprimanding him, Prime Minister Aguesid thoughtfully said, “He’s a Sequence 5, but he suddenly sold his business, abandoning an identity which he had used for more than a decade, and took an extreme risk in order to assassinate my brother. From this, we can make a compelling guess that he was instigated by a person or some faction. Unfortunately, he was killed while escaping. Even his Spirit Body was taken away. According to reports from the Nighthawks, it was done by the Hero Bandit Black Emperor.

“It involves an extremely secretive organization, and we aren’t able to find out anything about it in a short period of time?” Earl Hall asked.

“Yes, that so-called Hero Bandit didn’t leave any traces behind. We can only start with the people who had come into contact with Jason in the past few months. This will take a lot of time, and there may not be any results.” Aguesid gave an affirmative answer.

Earl Hall took two steps forward and asked, “What’s His Majesty’s attitude regarding this?”

“Grief, but no specific thoughts,” Aguesid replied.

Earl Hall frowned and said after some thought, “In that case, the important thing isn’t about who’s the mastermind behind the scenes, but what goal they wish to achieve through this matter. If they want war, or to restart the conflict in the colonies, then we need to tell the masses that the one instigating Patrick Jason was the Feysac Empire, and we would fabricate a detailed process and provide seemingly convincing evidence. In the past several centuries, this northern neighbor of ours has always played a similar role, and I think everyone is already used to it. I don’t think there’s any doubt that it’s very, very, very normal for the barbarians to do this sort of thing.”

“And the masses will be afraid of them.” Prime Minister Aguesid curled the corners of his lips, without intending to smile. “But we’re making a series of changes that will take at least half of next year for us to stabilize before we have the ability to wage war.”

Earl Hall muttered to himself, “Then let’s find a target that everyone will find acceptable. Hero Bandit Black Emperor is too mysterious and likewise for the secret organization behind him. If it’s made public just like that, it would definitely incur extreme panic. People are always afraid of the unknown.”

“Yes, what about the Aurora Order? They assassinated that pervert from Intis a few months ago. It wouldn’t surprise anyone if they do anything else.”

“Their reputation is bad enough. Their situation has already been repeated by the papers numerous times, to the point of becoming a horror element or classic antagonist in many novels. Besides, it will effectively reduce the suspicions that others have on us. There will always be people that believe the previous assassination was us commissioning the Aurora Order.

“Also, while we’re fighting against the illegal terrorist organization, let’s clean up Backlund. There are too many dangerous people hidden here.”

Aguesid answered tersely in agreement before continuing, “The Aurora Order isn’t a bad target...

“We shall first use them as a target. When the next year comes and we’re ready, then we’ll publish the results of the investigation, making an accusation that the one instigating the Aurora Order was the Feysac Empire. I believe that no one will care to defend a terrorist organization and the northern barbarians.”

Earl Hall was taken aback for a moment before saying, “This goes one step further than I thought.”

Without another word, Aguesid stood up and said, “I’m going to meet His Majesty now.”

Having said that, he looked at Earl Hall.

“You have to be careful of your safety too. We still haven’t figured out the motives of the people who assassinated my brother. Humph, the Church of Storms has already agreed to replace the archbishop of Backlund diocese. Snake is always late at crucial moments! The believers of the Storm are always irritable, irascible, stubborn, conceited, and easily maneuvered by others!”

“Don’t be prejudiced. For example, Leumi is very intelligent.” Earl Hall let out a low laugh, and then he tapped his chest four times. “Thank you, the Goddess will protect me.”

...

The Twilight Hermit Order... sounds very imposing... Returning to the real world, Klein stood up and pressed the mechanical button for the toilet.

He walked out of the bathroom amidst the sound of running water and thought about the information he had just received from spirit channeling.

He suspected that Twilight Hermit Order was the ancient organization with the second Blasphemy Slate which Emperor Roselle had joined.

To choose to have someone assassinate Duke Negan for the sake of a so-called “historical process” sounds a little absurd, but it also seems to make sense... Their goal is to revive or awaken the original Creator? This is similar to the City of Silver’s belief. Little Sun and company have never believed that the Creator is dead. They can only accept that “He” has abandoned that piece of land and has been trying to get a response from “Him”... Klein paced back and forth, letting his thoughts wander.

After an unknown amount of time, he suddenly heard knocking on the door.

It wasn’t an attendant or maid from the Quelaag Club, but the bespectacled Carlson, one of the Machinery Hivemind members whom Klein had seen before.

“How did you get in?” Klein asked deliberately.

When Carlson saw that he was indeed in the room, he relaxed a little. Seeing that no one was around, he smiled.

"As a Beyonder, we often have all sorts of methods."

He received news from Deacon Ikanser, learning of the Desire Apostle's death, and came to confirm my situation. As for my performance, it's rather successful. My "illusion of a living person" wasn't exposed, and I successfully pulled the wool over everyone's eyes... Klein's hearted stirred and said, "Your expression tells me that there's good news?"

"Yes, Patrick Jason Beria has been killed. You're safe and no longer need to be protected by us," Carlson said honestly.

Such feedback made Klein feel the potion inside his body to seemingly accelerate its digestion.

Surprised and delighted, he asked, "Are you sure?" "Yes."
Carlson gave an affirmative answer.

"That's great!" Klein said happily.

Carlson looked at him and complimented him wholeheartedly, "Your detective instincts and logical thinking have given us a great deal of help. The deacon wrote that after this matter is over, a reward will be given to you in secret. Probably about 1,000 pounds."

1,000 pounds... Not bad, very generous! However, even if the bills in Jason's suitcase were of five- or one-pound denominations, and even if his jewelry isn't too expensive, it should still add up to about 50,000 pounds, right... Ma'am Mary of the National Atmospheric Pollution Council is probably worth that much if one counts her shares in the Coim Company.

Yes, Jason's accomplice in luring Spellsinger of God away had probably taken some of the money. The remaining amount is probably around twenty to thirty thousand pounds, but that's still nothing 1,000 pounds can compare with. What a pity... I can't think of it that way. Maybe Jason's accomplice took all the wealth ahead of time... Klein felt a wave of disappointment and joy.

And the reward from the Machinery Hivemind was even more proof of the success of his performance during this period of time. It made him feel like he was only one step away from completely digesting the potion.

“This is something I should do. After all, the person being threatened is me.” Klein smiled.

He wasn’t worried about retaliation from Jason’s accomplice, because revenge was only a ruse. More importantly, he would be a Sequence 6 by then.

Carlson nudged his glasses and said thoughtfully, “Sherlock, you’re also a believer of God. We hope to establish a good relationship with you. In the future, you can inform us of whatever you encounter and gather.”

This is them developing me into an informant of the Machinery Hivemind... I have another channel for reimbursement... Klein drew a triangular-shaped Sacred Emblem on his chest.

“No problem.”

...

No longer being protected by the Machinery Hivemind, Klein stayed at the Quelaag Club until dinner, then he slowly took a carriage back to 15 Minsk Street.

He opened the letterbox out of habit and saw a new letter with no postage stamp.

The letter was from Detective Isengard Stanton, who left it after an afternoon visit, had written: “...I heard from the Machinery Hivemind of the suggestion you offered. Your sharpness and caution is truly astounding. If you weren’t already a Beyonder, then I would even believe that being a Reader is the pathway that suits you best.

“You truly are the best young man at deduction that I’ve ever met!”

...

Klein stood in the living room, reading Isengard’s letter by the light of the gas lamp.

This time, there was nothing new to the performance. It was done step by step and conformed to the past performances. It didn't even have much of an effect... But there were enough people in the audience, and all of them were by my side, which allowed me to get feedback directly... Klein held onto the letter as he reflected over the matter.

He half closed his eyes and felt something inside his body rapidly disintegrating and dissipating. Numerous illusory stars around him seemed to appear, and he could only feel a very weak attraction from the resplendent stars.

On the last month of 1349, his Magician potion was finally digested.

The street lamps at night illuminated the wet ground, which was sent splashing by the occasional horse carriage that passed by.

Backlund was located in the middle of the kingdom, only dozens of kilometers from the Sonia Sea, and it rained frequently all year round. The highest temperature in July was only 28 degrees Celsius, and the lowest was around 2 degrees Celsius in winter. The weather seldom had a chance of dropping to zero or lower, but this didn't stop people from feeling the cold here. Even the northerners from Feysac, who were used to living in ice and snow, sometimes couldn't bear the humidity that penetrated through their clothing and flesh.

Klein stood behind the oriel window in a room which didn't have its fireplace lit. He looked at the tranquil scene outside and felt relaxed in his body, heart, and soul.

As long as he gathered the ingredients and concocted the potion, he could immediately advance to Sequence 6, becoming a

Faceless.

The Magician potion has been completely digested... The Desire Apostle was personally finished off by me and he failed to escape... The Aurora Order's search of The Fool's believers is still going in circles... Apart from Mr. Azik being pursued by an unknown faction and the problem of the potion ingredients, I'm temporarily not troubled by anything... Klein leaned his body forward and took in a breath of air. He then looked at the fog that had condensed on the windows.

The reason why he had risked his life to intercept the Desire Apostle was because he was afraid that the other party would have other plans and, thus, smoothly escape from the pursuit of the official Beyonders. At that time, he might be remembered for his crucial advice and be avenged afterwards—as a Coldblooded, a Devil was unlikely to take the risk of avenging his comrades, but that didn't mean that they wouldn't choose to vent their anger on someone who nearly caused their death.

This operation was definitely necessary. Perhaps someone from the Twilight Hermit Order is somewhere receiving him. Once the Desire Apostle escapes, and with me not having any relevant information, perhaps I'll be prepared against a Sequence 5, believing that I would be pretty safe once I advance to Faceless, but the Desire Apostle might very well use the information provided by the Abyss card and the Twilight Hermit Order's help to advance to become a High-Sequence Beyonder! Such a development is quite scary if I think about it... One is required to inflict the finishing blow of justice... Klein reflected over what had happened this afternoon and summarized his experiences and lessons.

After enjoying the night scenery for a while, he returned to the sofa and sat down to think about his future plans.

With the reward provided by the Machinery Hivemind, I'll be able to afford the mutated pituitary gland and blood of a Thousandfaced Hunter. The Deep-sea Naga's hair simply requires me to have money. Such an ingredient should be relatively easy to find on the sea. I can get Mr. Hanged Man to help. The only problem is the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic...

And even if there is a clue, I don't have enough money...

With this in mind, Klein couldn't help but give a self-deprecating chuckle.

I'm not a person who particularly loves money, it's just a very average preference. When I was in Tingen, I always encouraged Melissa to spend and urged her and Benson to hire a maid. I felt that no matter what, I should try to not treat myself too badly, and every time I did a covert operation, I always placed safety first and made sure to be careful so that I wouldn't be affected mentally because of the allure of wealth.

However, in order to take revenge, I have to advance, and advancing requires me to buy expensive Beyonder ingredients. I can only accumulate every single penny and save whatever I can...

He suddenly hunched his shoulders and felt that the coldness of the living room made a Magician like him, who didn't have an excellent constitution, shudder.

Therefore, he decided to take a shower, crawl into bed, and read in bed.

There's only another three or four hours left before it's bedtime; there's no need to ignite the fireplace again... With a sigh, Klein got up and walked to the second floor.

...

Under the Steam Cathedral.

After Ikanser finished reading all the recorded statements, he picked up his coffee and took a sip.

After a few seconds of silence, he pulled out the ancient silver mirror called Arrodes.

Carlson took a glance at it and asked curiously, "Deacon, if I ask the honorable Arrodes about an unsolved mathematical problem or a classical paradox, will it give me the correct answer?"

"Most of the time, it will directly reject you. If it thinks that you have ill intentions, it will even give you a lightning strike or make you suffer a curse that you would never want to face," Ikanser said with a sigh. "It's a living Sealed Artifact with extremely high intelligence, not a rigid, rule-abiding difference machine. When using it, it's best not to think about trying to find loopholes."

Carlson looked around at his teammates and kindly suggested, "Deacon, let me ask the question for you. I have nothing I need to hide."

He straightened his back and assumed an open, honest posture.

Ikanser smiled bitterly and said, "There's no need, I already know what I need to know. I'm no longer afraid of similar questions, and occasionally, the honorable Arrodes will ask very profound questions. With your body's condition, the subsequent penalty won't be easy to bear."

With that said, he clenched his fists before spreading his fingers apart and gently stroked the surface of the mirror thrice.

In that subtle atmosphere, Ikanser asked in a deep voice, “Honorable Arrodes, my question is: ‘Who or what faction instigated the Desire Apostle to assassinate Duke Negan?’”

The silver mirror didn’t show any changes for a while. Only after a long time did the surface produce an aqueous light, forming a scene that looked like an oil painting.

It was a plain where the sun was about to set. The vast field was covered in a faint golden afterglow.

“What does that mean?” Carlson and the other members of the Machinery Hivemind looked at each other, unable to understand. Even though one of them was a Beyonder who had advanced from Mystery Pryer and was no stranger at reading revelations.

“Twilight? The symbol of the end of life? A sect that believes in Death, or lunatics that believe in the apocalypse?” a Mystery Pryer said after some deliberation.

Carlson nodded in agreement.

“I think it’s the latter.”

Ikanser ignored their discussion because Arrodes’s question had already appeared.

“What color of underwear do you like best?”

Ikanser’s face suddenly flushed red, and he felt as if smoke was rising from the top of his head.

With great difficulty, he spat out a word: “Red.”

The room suddenly became unusually quiet, and Carlson and the others pretended to look towards a corner.

Ikanser sat down wearily and scratched his fluffy hair, ready to ask the second question.

Carlson couldn’t bear it as he said, “Deacon, let me try.”

"...Try not to reach the punishment phase." Ikanser finally nodded in agreement.

Carlson confidently mimicked the deacon's actions, gently stroking the surface of the silver mirror three times while the other members gathered again.

"Honorable Arrodes, my question is 'Who are the accomplices of the Desire Apostle?'"

The aqueous light stirred as the scene changed. It first presented a woman's back, one with an outstanding figure.

Then, there was a person who was extremely blurry and could barely be identified as a man based on his attire.

"There is indeed another partner. This should be the person who sold the intelligence on Duke Negan! It's a pity that the other party has already dealt with it..." Carlson looked around and said.

He felt that he had no secrets and didn't need to care about the questions that followed.

This time, the choices that Arrodes offered was a question, a mission, or a penalty.

Without any hesitation, Carlson said, "Question!"

Words that looked like dripping blood quickly outlined the surface of the silver mirror: "Do you relieve yourself daily with your hand?"

Carlson's lips quivered, and he felt his ears rapidly turn hot.

Although this was something he found very normal, giving an answer in front of so many teammates and his superior still gave him the urge to bury his head in the ground.

"Yes..." he answered very quietly.

...

Under Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Daly, with her blue eye shadow, tossed a stack of documents in front of Soul Assurer Soest.

“All the information you want on the tarot card case.” “It’s smaller than I thought,” Soest said, slightly surprised.

Daly snickered.

“This is just an index.”

Upon seeing this, Leonard touched his lower lip with the palm of his red gloved-right hand.

“Captain Soest, why don’t we do a thorough investigation of the people who interacted with Jason Beria and compare it with the two previous cases? There might be clues to the organization that is symbolized by tarot cards.”

“Duke Negan is a devout believer of the Lord of Storms, and he represents the interests of the Church of Storms in the political scene. The Mandated Punishers will definitely be frantically searching for the real culprit, so we don’t need to get involved; otherwise, we’ll easily be put at odds with them. Let’s investigate the cases involving the tarot cards, and who knows, we might find new clues. Of course, we’ll definitely end up running all over the place, but that’s part and parcel of a Red Glove’s duties,” Soest explained with a smile.

Leonard nodded.

“I understand.

And deep in his mind, the elderly voice tsked and laughed.

“The Nighthawks have missed it just like that. That person has the smell of the Black Emperor, the true Black Emperor!”

...

Inside the Holy Wind Cathedral.

Wearing a black bonnet, Spellsinger of God, Ace Snake, swept his silver eyes and picked a Mandated Punisher elite.

“Although I’m about to leave Backlund, this is the decision of the Council of Cardinals.

“You only have one mission after this, and that is to investigate the assassination of Duke Negan.

“After applying, all of you have the right to use a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact. You must find out who is targeting us!”

Standing at the very front, a middle-aged man wearing a modified captain’s hat immediately led the group. He clenched his fist and lightly tapped his chest.

“As you command, Your Eminence!”

He was lean and had no particularly outstanding features, but there was an anchor tattoo on his neck.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey looked at Susie, who had opened the door herself, and said in a low voice, “What’s Father and the others talking about?”

When she found out that Earl Hall had returned late and that his expression was unusually grave, she immediately sent Susie in to listen.

“Duke Negan was assassinated.” Susie closed the door behind her with her feet.

“Ah?” Audrey froze, suspecting that she had misheard.

Although she had already experienced an assassination attempt on Duke Negan, she had never thought that this powerful noble would actually die.

“It’s true.” Susie gave an affirmative answer.

Audrey instantly felt a little blank, finding it a little surreal.

How could such a powerful noble, a person of flesh and blood, capable of speaking and laughing, the duke who had given her a piece of land, die just like that?

Suddenly, she felt the cruelty and coldness of the adult world.

“Who did it?” Audrey asked subconsciously.

"A Sequence 5 Devil," Susie answered quickly. "But he has already been silenced by the so-called Hero Bandit Black Emperor." "Ah?" Audrey was stunned once again.

How could it be the Hero Bandit Black Emperor? How could it be Mr. Fool's Blessed?

He helped me resolve the problem of Duke Negan's previous assassination!

This is a complete contradiction!

Audrey immediately told Susie to eavesdrop again while she locked the door behind her and sat at the edge of her bed, praying to Mr. Fool.

After she had finished reciting his honorific name and had described the assassination of Duke Negan, she asked with great trust, "Was your Blessed present there?"

After a while, she saw the endless gray fog and heard the voice of The Fool.

"Yes.

"He's looking for the organization that directed the Desire Apostle."

As expected, it wasn't arranged by Mr. Fool! Was the reason why "He" had his Blessed stop Qilangos last time also because of that organization that's pulling the strings behind the scenes? Audrey relaxed and asked curiously, "What organization is that? For it to gain your attention."

A second later, she heard Mr. Fool reply in an unperturbed manner, "Twilight Hermit Order."

Twilight Hermit Order...

What kind of organization is it? Why haven't I heard of it? When Mr. Hanged Man was filling me in on the general knowledge of the various factions, he didn't even mention anything about this...

Audrey was both surprised and confused. As the gray fog faded away, Mr. Fool's aloof figure had vanished.

Her eyes darted around as she quickly made a guess.

This organization known as the Twilight Hermit Order sounds even more powerful and mysterious than the other underground powers such as the Aurora Order and the Life School of Thought. It's so unknown that even the knowledgeable and experienced Mr. Hanged Man, who's closely related to the Church of Storms, doesn't know of its existence...

And their plot was directed at a powerful noble of the kingdom, one of the most powerful people in the world.

They might be the observers hidden in the deepest depths of the Beyonder world, the true controllers. They influence the situation of the Northern and Southern Continents, so it's no wonder that they would be noticed by Mr. Fool...

The last time Mr. Hanged Man successfully got "His" Blessed to help wasn't because the promised reward was sufficiently high, but because Mr. Fool himself was targeting Twilight Hermit Order...

This organization is as mysterious as our Tarot Club...

Audrey, for some inexplicable reason, became a little excited, and this diluted the impact Duke Negan's assassination had on her.

There definitely aren't a lot of Beyonders who know of the existence of the Twilight Hermit Order. And I'm one of them, and we, the Tarot Club, are targeting them! Audrey stood up and walked to the full-body mirror in front of her.

She raised her chin slightly, showing an abnormally beautiful angle.

Staring at the girl in the mirror, Audrey slowly calmed down. This was the first time she felt it was imperative that she quickly raised her Sequence.

Even Duke Negan, a Beyonder under tremendous amounts of protection, can be assassinated, let alone Father who's just an ordinary person.

Although based on the family vault's situation, there are definitely many Beyonders in the family, and the Church of the Goddess will also provide additional protection. However, this doesn't ease my heart. Duke Negan's guards aren't any weaker than what we have...

All the best, Audrey, get to Sequence 7 as soon as possible, then Sequence 6, and then hide in the darkness. I'll be my father, mother, and brothers' last line of defense!

...

The capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity.

The Blue Avenger was once again passing by, moored at the port, giving sailors a chance to indulge and vent.

Alger Wilson changed into a robe embroidered with storm patterns and went to the largest cathedral on the archipelago, the Cathedral of Waves.

It was classical in style, and it mostly used stone pillars and arched structures, and it had a towering dome and two clock towers—in the early days of colonization, the pioneers often had no time to build a cathedral, which brought about very serious consequences for them.

Surrounded by tribes, jungles, and ancient buildings, they would often die mysteriously in great numbers for no reason at all, even after they had conquered the region.

This situation, which had caused a great panic, gradually deteriorated after the cathedrals of the various Churches were built, becoming something that happened only once in a while.

Standing in front of the cathedral, Alger was in no hurry to enter. Instead, he looked through the narrow windows at the dark and

mysterious atmosphere and the warm candlelight that illuminated the activity area.

A few seconds later, he entered the grand prayer hall, clenched his right fist and struck his left chest. He turned to the bishop facing him and said, “May the Storm be with you!”

“May the Storm be with you!” the bishop responded in the same way.

Without waiting for Alger to speak, the bishop of the Cathedral of Waves took out a telegram.

“You’re just in time. The Council of Cardinals has issued orders. Read it before praying.”

“What orders?” Alger asked casually as he reached out to take it.

The bishop’s expression was grave as he said, “Duke Negan has been assassinated. The Council of Cardinals has ordered all Mandated Punisher and priests to pay attention to anything regarding the Hero Bandit Black Emperor, as well as all the matters related to the tarot ritual.”

Hero Bandit Black Emperor? Alger perfectly expressed his surprise.

He already knew that the Black Emperor was Mr. Fool’s Blessed.

The bishop said with a serious nod, “The assassin of Duke Negan is a Sequence 5 Devil, but while escaping, he was killed by Hero Bandit Black Emperor. This is the same outcome as Vice Admiral Qilangos, who failed to assassinate the duke.”

Not only are the superficial circumstances the same, but even the core issues are the same... It was also Mr. Fool’s Blessed who killed Qilangos, another Blessed... Was Mr. Fool the one who really wanted Duke Negan dead? No, if it were really him, then he would’ve warned Qilangos the last time to be careful of Miss Justice, so as to not expose his identity on the spot... Mr. Fool is paying attention to the truth behind the assassination and the real murderer? Who could it be, or which organization would receive so much attention from Mr. Fool? Alger instantly thought of many things and made a preliminary judgment.

He looked down at the telegram and saw that the Church had set up a special investigation team for the assassination of Duke Negan. Every member was an elite of the Mandated Punishers.

Should I apply to join, so as to have a grasp of their actions at any time? Alger hesitated for a moment.

In the end, he decided to follow his original plan and keep a low profile.

...

With a brand new day, Klein slept until he woke up naturally. He slowly got up, washed his face, and went downstairs.

He wasn't in a hurry to prepare breakfast. Instead, he habitually opened the door, bathed in the fog, and took out today's newspaper from the letterbox.

"What is it?" Suddenly, he noticed that there was a thick envelope stuffed inside the newspaper. It wasn't light at all.

Squeezing the surface, Klein's mind flashed with the faint fragrance of banknote ink.

His spiritual intuition told him that there was a lot of cash inside.

Carefully, he opened it and pulled out the stack of money.

After counting the money, he confirmed that there was a total of 1000 pounds.

It's the reward money from the Machinery Hivemind... Is this their way of secretly handing me the money? How can they be so certain this is fine? Leaving it in my mailbox just like that? What happens if it's stolen? The delighted Klein couldn't help but grumble.

With this money, and without the Machinery Hivemind protecting him in secret, he could go to Vampire Emlyn White to complete the previous transaction!

After breakfast, Klein immediately put on his coat and hat, held his cane, and stuffed the newspaper in his arm and went out.

On his way to the carriage stop, he saw his landlord, Mrs. Stelyn Sammer directing the maid to load the suitcase into the carriage in front of the door.

“Good morning, Mrs. Sammer.” Klein smiled and greeted her.

Stelyn smiled modestly and returned the greeting.

She seems to have recovered mentally... Who knows what happened to her... Klein curiously asked, “Where are you going?”

“It’s almost New Year’s. Mary gave Luke some time off in advance. We’re going to Desi Bay to usher in the new year,”

Stelyn said proactively. “Sigh, we’ve been to a few of the cities there, including the famous coastal towns. This time, we’re preparing to go to Feynapotter. I’ve heard that the scenery in Seville City is quite good.”

Klein replied in jest, “How enviable.”

“What about you? Detective Moriarty, where do you plan on spending the New Year?” Stelyn asked with a smile.

I’m probably staying here... Oh right, I have to prepare some tools to repair the wall which Stuart had previously shot a hole in... Klein smirked and said, “Back to Midseashire, where the winter smells different.”

The smile on Stelyn’s face became even more obvious.

“I hope to meet you at Desi Bay in future New Year’s Eve celebrations.”

...

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

Upon seeing Detective Sherlock Moriarty in his black tweed coat, Emlyn White, who was carefully wiping the candle stand, smiled.

He combed his hair, walked over with his head held high and said in a low voice, “There’s information on Jason Beria. A Sanguine knows him.”

“I have his information as well.” Klein smiled as he handed the newspaper over. The headline read: “Yesterday, His Grace the Duke of Negan assassinated, a true devil plundering the land.”

Beneath the title was a detailed description of the assassination yesterday, and it revealed that the murderer was a banker named Patrick Jason who was killed on the spot, and the terrorist organization, the Aurora Order, claimed responsibility.

When he saw the news earlier, Klein, who was having his breakfast, almost spewed out the milk in his mouth.

At first, he imagined that the Aurora Order’s Mr. A was brain damaged to take responsibility for this matter. However, after thinking about it carefully, he felt that it was most likely a cover used by the officials.

If the Twilight Hermit Order is really the ancient organization which Emperor Roselle joined, then they would be extremely hostile towards the Aurora Order. After all, they hate the True Creator... This thought suddenly flashed through Klein’s mind.

Emlyn looked blankly at the newspaper again and again before asking in disbelief, “Does this mean the information I got is useless?”

“In theory.” Klein gave the vampire gentleman a sympathetic look. “However, the official organizations are still investigating the masterminds behind Jason Beria, if your information points in the right direction, it should be of worth.”

As for Klein himself, he obviously didn’t want to get involved in this matter anymore.

“No... He only knew Jason Beria and some of his hobbies.” Emlyn sighed.

Seeing his reaction, Klein asked in amusement, “Don’t you usually read newspapers?”

How did you only learn of such an important matter until now!?

Emlyn gave him an odd glance.

“Why should I read the newspapers?

“I’m very busy.”

Busy cleaning the Harvest Church, busy spending time with those dolls you have at home, and busy thinking of ways to trick people into giving you blood to drink... You really are a new-age vampire... Klein opened his mouth, but he used his Clown powers to suppress the laughter he was about to let out.

He didn’t tease Emlyn White and said seriously, “I’ve already gathered enough money for those two ingredients.

“When can you give them to me?”

Chapter 431: A Drowning Man Shouldn't Desperately Clutch at Straws

Upon hearing Klein's question, Emlyn White jumped in fright as he carefully sized him up and said, "You're richer than I thought."

He had imagined that Sherlock Moriarty would take at least a week to raise 2,450 pounds.

"I've been saving for a long time." Klein sighed in response.

Emlyn nodded thoughtfully.

"It's so lucrative being a private detective?"

"This is just an identity that makes things convenient. If you don't encounter a huge bounty, it'll be two to three hundred pounds a year," Klein said frankly.

Emlyn glanced at him and asked casually, "So what do you actually do? Smuggling arms? Stealing from the vaults of the rich and powerful? For Beyonders below Sequence 7, there's not much that can be done to save up more than 2,000 pounds so quickly, and most of them are gray areas that border on breaking the law."

You, a vampire, are talking to me about breaking the law? It seems like you're rather eager to make some quick money... Klein smiled.

"Accept some relatively dangerous missions; if you aren't afraid of death, you can try."

Emlyn shut his mouth, and only after a long time did he say, "Come and find me in the evening. I'll take you to the seller's place."

What an obedient vampire... Klein was about to agree, but he suddenly found it unsafe.

What if the seller gets thoughts from seeing all the money? What if he doesn't have the corresponding Beyonder ingredients and is trying to fool me to commit a robbery? Emlyn White can be trusted, but not necessarily the seller he's introducing... I have to find an excuse to perform a divination above the gray fog to confirm the degree of danger... Yes, there's no need for it to be so complicated. There's a

better way... After some thought, Klein turned his head to look at Emlyn.

“No, go by yourself.

“I’ll give you 1,000 pounds as a deposit, and you’ll bring the two ingredients to the Harvest Church. After confirmation, I’ll pay the remaining balance. I believe the seller will accept this method. This will show the credit of a noble Sanguine.”

Upon being flattered, Emlyn unconsciously lifted his chin.

“There’s no problem with this way of trading.”

Saying that, he let out a laugh.

“Are you afraid that the other party will not keep their word? Are you more at ease in the Harvest Church?”

“Of course, anyone would feel safe when they see a Earth Mother Blessed by the side, who is over 2.2 meters tall and has exceptionally firm muscles.” Klein smiled and pointed at Father Utravsky. “People who can deal with him wouldn’t mind two to three thousand pounds.”

Emlyn’s face darkened, and he snorted.

“Aren’t you worried that I’ll steal the thousand-pound deposit?” Klein casually looked straight ahead.

“Why should I be worried?

“You will come back here every day, making it easy to find you, and a living creature like a vampire would sell for more than a thousand pounds.”

Emlyn, who had been hit in a sore spot, muttered in exasperation, “Sanguine! Do you understand? Sanguine!

“Also, don’t call me a creature!”

Klein chuckled and didn’t say anything as he waited for Emlyn to calm down.

“We’ll do it the way you requested.” Finally, Emlyn reached out and rubbed his temples.

Klein immediately took out the envelope he had received that morning, and he handed it to him along with the thick stack of cash worth a thousand pounds.

"See you here at eight tonight."

After counting the bills and after confirming that there was no mistake, Emlyn warily stole a glance at Father Utravsky and said in a low voice, "Mr. Private Detective, with you being in contact with a lot of intelligence and news, have you heard of an evil god known as The Fool?"

Evil?... Evil? You f... Inwardly, Klein nearly threw out a profanity.

He answered with the most normal expression, "Many people are searching for believers of The Fool recently. Are you planning on joining their ranks to obtain the relevant bounty?"

Emlyn sighed and said, "No, I'm only considering whether I should ask this evil god or the evil soul to help me dispel the psychological cue. As you know, the rumors going around include "His" specific honorific name, and as long as it's converted into Hermes or ancient Hermes, it's possible to get a response... What do you know about "Him"? How much harm will "He" bring to "His" believers? Will "He" forcefully change the believers' views?"

Although it points to me, I still have to say. My dear vampire friend, you are like a drowning man desperately clutching at straws... Feeling mixed emotions, Klein said, "The Fool is very mysterious. Up to this day, apart from the news you already know, no one knows of 'His' detailed situation. For example, how vast his clergy is, or what sort of corresponding prayer rituals there are.

"What puzzles me is that you aren't considering the two of your vamp—Uh, Sanguine's ancestor, the ancient goddess Lilith? As long as the ritual is correct and the offerings are appropriate, 'She' will help you dispel the psychological cue."

Emlyn leaned back slightly and stared straight ahead, saying nothing for several seconds.

He seemed to instantly become sullen.

After a brief moment of silence, he said in a low voice, “Before the Cataclysm, the ancestor had already rarely responded to prayers. Only certain special circumstances allowed us to get ‘Her’ help. This does not include the removal of a psychological cue.”

In the legends of the City of Silver, the ancient goddess, Lilith, who represented the moon had already had her authority taken back by the awakened Creator, or perhaps she had fallen in some battle among the gods earlier on... Then, who is the one occasionally responding to the Sanguines’ pleas? The Primordial Moon? Klein deliberately pressed, “Then, there’s still the Primordial Moon to pray to. Many underground Beyonders have rituals that borrow ‘His’ power.”

This is mainly referring to the Shaman King and the corresponding biological creatures... Klein added inwardly.

Emlyn’s lips quivered, but he didn’t speak as there was an indescribable fear on his face.

After a long time, he solemnly said, “I suspect that the Primordial Moon was impersonated by some evil god or a highlevel devil. People who pray to ‘Him’ mostly experience change, turning cruel, crazy, and even filled with desire. And the remaining ones, with the Sanguine mainly, there is a higher chance of them losing control and becoming true monsters.

“There was once a powerful Sanguine that tried to pray due to some danger, but she ended up turning into nothing but a hunk of meat that only knows to mate and reproduce. She, together with bulls, rams, stallions, mice, and even plants and rocks, gave birth to one strange descendant after another. Each one of them developed their own Monster species. Thankfully, she was quickly eliminated along with her descendants.

...The Primordial Moon is that dangerous? There was no mention of it in the Book of Secrets. Had Shaman King Klarman’s thoughts been corrupted? Fortunately, I only referenced, modified, and prayed to myself... Klein’s heart raced in fright as a result of Emlyn White’s description.

This made him acutely realize that the hidden existences other than the seven deities were indeed not that trustworthy.

Except me... He sighed.

At that moment, Emlyn smiled bitterly and said, "If the negative effects brought by The Fool isn't that great, praying to 'Him' might be something to consider."

The only effect is that you will pay a certain amount of money for it... In order to maintain his image, Klein could only pat Emlyn on the shoulder and draw a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"It's very dangerous to pray to a hidden existence that you don't know about. If you're considering that, you might as well choose a faith out of the seven deities you prefer. They won't affect your daily life and won't make you abandon your dolls."

"If there's really no other way..." Emlyn suddenly found himself calmer than he had expected.

Klein didn't linger on. He pushed his way out into the aisle and walked out of the Harvest Church.

Looking out at the misty sky, he began to think about what to do next.

There was no doubt that his current focus was on saving money and finding the ingredients.

Little Sun's side needs to stabilize a little more. To prevent him from being suspected again, I'll use the method of ridding a Rampager's mental corruption as the promised payment... The Deep-sea Naga's hair can be entrusted to Mr. Hanged Man. I'll have to rely on myself for the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic... There hasn't been any relevant information from Emlyn White and Eye of Wisdom, Mr. Stanton, for over a month. I'll have to try different channels... Yes, it's been quite long. It's likely that the High-Sequence Beyonder of the Rose School of Thought isn't monitoring the Bravehearts Bar that closely. I'll go visit it in the evening and see if I can contact Miss Sharron and Maric... Klein quickly had an idea.

In order to go to Bravehearts Bar, he had to first go to East Borough and change his worker's clothes in the one-bedroom apartment he also rented on Black Palm Street.

As he thought of this, he walked towards the carriage stop on the opposite side of the road.

...

West Borough, inside Grimm Cemetery.

Fors Wall, who was dressed in a black veiled hat, quietly walked beside Dorian Gray, a member of the Abraham family. She had accompanied him to place flowers on Lawrence, Aulisa, and company's graves.

While walking silently, her thoughts were completely focused on the Beyonder ingredient, the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch.

She knew that she had already digested the Apprentice potion and as long as she could get the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch, she would become a Trickmaster. However, she ultimately lacked the clues related to it, and The Sun, that she had the most expectations at being able to help her, didn't dare to hold a ritual or invite friends to hunt Spirit Eaters because of what had happened before.

In order to advance as quickly as possible and escape the curse of the full moon, she had even asked Mr. Fool for help, hoping that "His" Blessed could help her find the ingredients. In the process, she revealed that she had published her new book and was about to receive a fixed fee for the book, in order to prove that she had sufficient power to purchase it—she didn't fear that her real identity would be known by Mr. Fool, because she believed that Mr. Fool clearly knew it.

In the secluded, quiet, and cold environment, Fors and Dorian stopped at Lawrence's grave.

Looking at the photo taken after his death and reading the epitaph: "he's a good teacher," Dorian Gray remained silent for a long time before sighing.

"How ironic..."

"Why?" Fors asked in surprise.

She had heard Lawrence mention that he was a public school teacher in Constant City, Midseashire, and that was why she had used such an epitaph.

“This has nothing to do with you. It has to do with our family.” Dorian gave a self-deprecating laugh and bent down to put down the flowers.

After straightening his body, he looked straight ahead, and suddenly spoke out, “Fors, do you want to become a Beyonder?

The kind I described in my letter.”

Dorian Gray's question didn't surprise Fors at all. She had been prepared after keeping in contact with him for the past month, and she had even asked the experienced Mr. Hanged Man at the Tarot Club to decide what kind of expression and reaction she should use when faced with the question.

"Are there really such Beyonders?" Fors asked in surprise.

Dorian gently nodded.

"Yes."

He looked around to make sure that there was no one around, then he walked up to a tree with fallen leaves and pressed his hand on it.

Dorian's figure suddenly blurred, as if turning into a reflection in the water.

When it was clear, he had already appeared behind the tree, his posture unchanging.

"Oh god! That's really, really amazing!" Remembering the teachings of Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice, her mouth opened in a semicircle as she exclaimed.

Dorian walked back, smiled, and asked, "Do you want to become such a Beyonder?"

Fors fell silent for a moment before she answered him

"excitedly", "... "Yes!"

Now that she was finally going to be a periphery member of the Abraham family, many things would be much easier for her in the future! Her heart was filled with genuine joy.

Dorian laughed before turning his expression grave, asking in all seriousness, "Are you willing to be my student?" Fors nodded.

"Yes!"

Dorian let out a sigh of relief and then made a self-deprecating comment.

“I’m not a good teacher, I even taught a... Heh, there’s no need to mention the past anymore. In short, don’t hold too high of an expectation.”

After considering it over this period of time, he had decided to learn from his previous experiences and lessons. He didn’t tell Fors the situation regarding the Abraham family and only treated their relationship as one of teacher and student. That way, he didn’t have to worry about the other party coveting his family’s few remaining mystical items.

“No, your explanations of mysticism are excellent, really, Mr. Gray. No, Teacher.” Fors quickly confirmed the relationship between them.

Dorian looked at the tombstone, shook his head, and exhaled.

“I wasn’t planning on taking in any more students, but your noble character infected me.

“If nothing unexpected happens, I can give you the corresponding potion today.”

“Today?” Fors asked, surprised.

Back when she went to Backlund Station to pick up Dorian Gray, she noticed that he was carrying only a very small suitcase, barely enough for a change of clothes. There was no evidence that he had any Beyonder ingredients on him.

Does he have his own resources and channels in Backlund, ones that belong to the Abraham family? Fors made a vague guess.

Her original plan was to rely on the inconvenience of the distance between them to sell off the Beyonder ingredients for the Apprentice potion, and then tell him that she had successfully advanced to become a Beyonder. This way, she was able to obtain a considerable amount of cash, as well as to avoid the tragic consequence of taking the Apprentice potion again and having to spend time to digest it.

“Yes.” Without explaining, Dorian pointed in the other direction. “Let’s go see Laubero and Aulisa first.”

Taking a turn, they left Grimm Cemetery and returned to the house in Cherwood Borough which Fors and Xio had rented.

For the past month or so, Xio, who had advanced to Sheriff, had been leaving early and returning late every day in order to pay off her heavy debts. She had been trying hard to get every bounty she could get, so there was no doubt that she was of the house around noon.

“Is there a quiet room?” Dorian looked around casually.

“Plenty.” Fors led her new teacher into the activity room on the first floor.

Dorian circled the room, checked the surroundings, and then asked Fors to light a candle mixed with a piece of dark red sandalwood.

He closed the door and drew the curtains.

He walked to the candle and took out two bottles of essential oil and some common herbal powders.

Holding a ritual? Shouldn’t there be three candles? Fors curiously watched from the side and didn’t rashly open her mouth, as if she was stunned by the atmosphere.

After finishing the first part of the ritual, Dorian took a step back and, with a serious expression, switched to the language of ancient Hermes.

“I!

“I summon in my name:

“Special Spirit Bodies roaming the upper realms, the void creature that loves music, Dorian Gray Abraham’s Contract Companion.” *Whoosh!*

There was a sudden gust of wind in the activity room, and with a sobbing voice, the flickering candle flames were tinged with a deep blue hue.

The rings of light quickly spread out, forming a door that was beyond the concept of normality.

A ball of semi-illusory and half-corporeal objects flew out from the bottom of the circle of light.

Its entire body was colored a milky white. There were no eyes, nose, arms, or legs around it. Only an opening which resembled a mouth cracked open over its surface.

Dorian grinned, opened his mouth, and began to hum a gentle folk lullaby.

The "ball" swayed left and right, appearing extremely satisfied.

After he finished humming, Dorian extended his hand.

"Malmouth, give me the items that I deposited with you the day before yesterday."

The "ball" jumped up and down as its body suddenly swelled while it opened its "mouth" extremely wide.

Then, it spat out two Beyonder ingredients which had strange lusters to them.

To think that can be done... Fors stared in surprise.

Dorian caught the Apprentice potion's main ingredients, canceled the summoning, and ended the ritual.

He turned his head and smiled at Fors.

"Even in the spirit world, void creatures like Malmouth are extremely rare. Under normal circumstances, summoning rituals will not point to them. An elder of a sufficiently high Sequence must enter the Spirit World and, after a long period of searching, make a contract with one of them. That way, it will allow subsequent descendants to complete a summoning ritual with their corresponding name.

"After the void creature arrives, a new contract can be made, making them closely connected to oneself and no longer summonable by others."

"So that's how it is... That sounds interesting!" Fors said from the bottom of her heart.

She couldn't help but look forward to the future.

If I don't consider the curse of the full moon, or how ordinary Beyonders are being suppressed and constantly facing danger,

exploring this wonderful world would be the most delightful thing... I hope that one day I can truly roam the Spirit World...

Dorian responded with a chuckle, "Malmouth's greatest ability is to swallow many items into its belly without causing them any harm. It's the equivalent of a mobile, hidden warehouse that almost no one can find.

"Of course, it can't store too much as its stomach has limited space. Also, it doesn't like people without talent in music. It would reject signing a contract with such people."

At least I can play the lyre... Just as Fors breathed a sigh of relief, Dorian instructed her to get him a black stew pot.

Realizing that he was about to concoct the potion right there and then, she maintained her expression, but her heart was frantically praying for an accident.

I don't want to drink the Apprentice potion again! That would waste a lot of time! If I had known that this would happen, then I would've been more honest... It's too late to tell the truth. Teacher Gray must've tried a divination attempt, but the outcome suffered interference. Confessing now would mean that there's a powerful person backing me or instigating me... In the midst of her thoughts, she saw Dorian turn around and hand her a bottle of the bubbling potion.

"Drink it and you'll become a Beyonder," Dorian said in a flat but very seductive tone.

Then he reassured her, "Don't worry. There won't be any problems with me here."

"Okay!" Fors gritted her teeth, received the Apprentice potion, and drank it all in one gulp.

At the same time, a thought flashed in her mind:

Honesty is the best policy...

...

The carriage stopped outside East Borough, and Klein, walking with a cane and a hat, entered the spacious slum in a relatively decent neighborhood.

As he walked forward, he saw two familiar figures emerge from the relatively clean apartment in front of him.

They were girls, one seventeen or eighteen years old, the other fifteen or sixteen years old—daughters of the laundry maid, Liv —Freja, and Daisy. The latter had once been kidnapped by Capim and was rescued by the Black Emperor.

Daisy also spotted Klein and smiled brightly.

“Good afternoon, Detective Moriarty!”

Klein smiled and nodded before asking in puzzlement, “Daisy, don’t you have public elementary school to attend?”

At the behest of reporters like Mike Joseph and the push by the Church of Evernight, the Backlund government established a charity fund with Capim’s estate, specifically to help women and families who had been hurt by Capim.

Daisy’s family took advantage of the opportunity to move from a shabby apartment in an environment with poor security to the outskirts of East Borough. They moved from one room to two, separating the “laundry area” from the place where they ate and slept.

In addition, Daisy received a bursary for attending a public elementary school, and she was delighted that the charity fund was responsible for her tuition and meals costing three pence a week.

What puzzled Klein was that the public elementary school only had breaks on Sundays, so Daisy wasn’t supposed to be here at this time.

“The school is very close, I took advantage of the afternoon break to return and help Freja bring the washed and dried laundry to a client. She and mother can’t handle the workload,” Daisy answered frankly.

The immediate effect of her going to school was that the amount of laundry which Liv and Freja could do every day decreased, obviously lowering their family income. If it wasn’t for Mike’s help applying for

a grant from the charity, then they wouldn't be able to maintain their present lives.

Therefore, there was no doubt that Freja wouldn't be able to enter a public elementary school, and when Daisy and Klein talked about it, her eyes were filled with unconcealed envy and pain.

Despite not even being eighteen years old yet, all she could do was silently watch her sister attend school.

Klein noticed that detail and deliberately reminded Daisy, "You really should know that your mother and Freja are having a hard time. Treat them well."

Daisy nodded seriously and said, "I've thought about it. When things settle down, I'll teach Freja what I learned during the day at night and on Sundays. I'll be her only tutor!"

Freja's eyes suddenly blinked, and she couldn't help lowering her head.

"Good, very good," Klein praised her before bidding them farewell in a good mood, and he turned to another street.

He went to Black Palm Street to change out of his worker clothes, and just after he left the apartment where he was renting a room from, he saw an old middle-aged man walk over. He asked with a kind face, "Sir, have you heard of the original Creator?"

The original Creator? Klein was stunned for a moment, and then he immediately thought of the intelligence that Old Kohler had previously given him.

Recently, there had been people preaching the faith of the original Creator in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. It pushed the belief that "He" hadn't really passed away and that he existed in the body of every human being and every object. As long as one served "Him" wholeheartedly and praised "Him," then not only would "His" believers be redeemed after death, but they would also enter "His" kingdom. They would also suffer tremendous improvements in their present life, for instance, having sizzling meat to eat every day.

This was very close to the Aurora Order's theory of the mutated Creator, so Klein had decided that it was the secret organization which was behind it. He felt that they had begun to value the vast majority of the poor after the Lanevus incident.

They've already developed so arrogantly to even solicit people on the streets? Klein hesitated and replied, "I've heard of that."

The well-dressed middle-aged man immediately revealed a smile.

"Then, do you know about the incoming apocalypse? Do you know that the original Creator will create a sanctuary to protect 'His' believers?"

For a moment, Klein thought of going with the flow and be inoculated so as to slowly infiltrate the Aurora Order's periphery organization, so as to gather the appropriate evidence and clues to take revenge on them for seeking the believers of The Fool. But after careful consideration, he felt that it was too dangerous. It was something that was tiring and troublesome for him to do alone, without any certainty of success.

In the end, he decided to inform the Machinery Hivemind about the current situation and leave it to the official organizations to handle!

After thinking through the problem, Klein's expression immediately darkened.

“I don’t know, and I don’t want to know!”

He strode forward, shaking off the middle-aged man and ignoring his shouts.

On the way out of East Borough, he watched carefully and found that the workers who had lost their jobs due to the off-season and the efficiency improvements from textile machines were grouped together. They were being comforted and were listening to the preaches from people of unknown identities.

The investigations of East Borough, the dock area, and factory district were completed two months ago. Why haven’t the three Churches and parliament produced any concrete measures yet? The importance that they’ve placed on this issue must’ve increased. It’s impossible for them to not notice the current situation... Is this a trap for bigger fish? That’s very risky and can easily get out of hand! As Klein lampooned, he pushed the cap on his head as he walked out of East Borough and went straight to the Backlund Bridge area.

At noon, the Bravehearts Bar had just opened, and there were almost no drunkards present. Only the nearby, busy workers would come in and grab a simple lunch.

Klein mingled with them and spent ten pence on wheat bread with pork sausages and a glass of Southville beer, making himself appear rather rich.

After leisurely filling his stomach and finishing his beer, he looked at the bartender.

“Is Kaspars Kalinin here?”

He planned on replenishing some of his ordinary ammunition while he was here.

The bartender glanced at him.

“It seems like you haven’t been here in a while?

“Kaspars is dead. It’s said that he was a little restless while sleeping at night, wrapping himself in a tight bundle and suffocating himself in the end. Heh heh, I don’t really believe that kind of thing would

happen. I've only heard about such things in ghost stories, but that's what those black-and-white dogs say."

Black-and-white dogs were referring to the police who wore black-and-white checked uniforms.

Suffocating himself to death? That sounds like mysticism... Was it because the Rose School of Thought's High-Sequence Beyonder was unable to find Miss Sharron and Maric, and thus, they chose to kill someone to vent their anger? Where's the bearing of being a High-Sequence Beyonder? In that case, Kaspars wasn't able to contact Miss Sharron... Perhaps they've already left Backlund

Kaspars wasn't prepared for the dangers of the Beyonder world. If it were me, I wouldn't have returned to the Bravehearts Bar. I would've taken all the money I saved up and go to another city for a change in environment... However, under normal circumstances, a High-Sequence Beyonder wouldn't specially deal with such ordinary people. At most, they would force a mediumship ritual without considering the aftereffects... As expected of the self-indulgent Rose School of Thought. To think a High-Sequence Beyonder would actually do such a thing...

While feeling surprised, Klein also felt pity for the black-market arms dealer.

The bartender wiped a cup and continued, "If you wish to buy some stuff, there's a new dealer." "Who?" Klein asked in passing.

"Old Man. He's in Billiard room 3," the bartender said without looking up.

Klein immediately stood up, slowly walked towards that familiar place, and knocked on the unlocked door.

"Come in." A voice rang out.

This voice sounds a little familiar... Klein pushed open the door and looked inside.

Standing by the table was a boy that didn't look too old. He was dressed in an old overcoat, a brown bowler hat, and had bright red eyes. It was Ian, whom Klein had met when he first arrived in Backlund. Back then, he was entrusted with the case of Detective

Zreal's disappearance and was ultimately involved in the conflict over the manuscripts of a third-generation difference machine. He had been forced to pay a high price to have Mr. A from the Aurora Order kill the Intis ambassador that was sent to the Loen Kingdom, Bakerland Jean Madan.

"It's you, Detective Moriarty?" Ian was startled.

He had deliberately stuck two whiskers above his mouth to make himself look older.

Klein smiled as he entered the billiard room and closed the door in passing.

"Long time no see."

He was initially surprised that Ian had appeared here and had become a black-market arms dealer, but then he thought of the details behind the matter and found that it made sense.

Klein being able to come to the Bravehearts Bar and find Kaspars Kalinin was all thanks to Ian's introduction.

This teenage boy definitely had some connections around here!

"Yeah." Ian wiped away his shocked expression and mumbled, "I went to Pritz Harbor for two months and found those guys to be so savage and cruel. They didn't even have the slightest bit of modesty or love for children, so I had no choice but to return to Backlund and do what I was good at. When Kaspars died, I decided to switch careers."

Before Klein could say anything, he added, "Mr. Detective, I've always kept in mind that I still owe you two requests."

There's no need to explain so much, nor do I care what you've done in the past. Although I've always thought that your escape from MI9 was suspicious, I didn't care too much about it... Klein picked up a cue stick, gestured, and said, "Other than dealing in blackmarket weapons, you seem to be selling information?"

"Yes," Ian answered very calmly. "What do you want to know?

It's free."

Very straightforward... Feeling guilty about what happened to me previously? Klein pushed the cue stick forward and hit the ball, sending a red ball right into the middle pocket.

Without a trace of politeness, he straightened his body and said, "Recently, everyone has been looking for the believers of The Fool. There are many bounties available. What news do you have?"

Ian thought for a moment and said, "Nothing.

"I even suspect whether The Fool has any believers since no one can find any clues."

...This is what you call blasting air with a cannon... Klein gave a silent, self-deprecating laugh before turning to ask, "In addition, there's another bounty. People are looking for a lecturer named Azik Eggers. I wish to know who was the one behind the bounty, so as to determine if I should involve myself in it. Heh, searching for people is very time-consuming."

Ian didn't directly answer; he surveyed his surroundings and lowered his voice.

"MI9."

MI9? It's not the Numinous Episcopate... It seems like it really was arranged by Ince Zangwill. He's trying to create conflict between Mr. Azik and MI9? Perhaps he knows some secret that he shouldn't be aware of? A series of thoughts flashed through Klein's mind. Finally, he smiled and said, "Looks like I don't have to worry about the bounty being false, but I'm afraid that the circumstances as to why Azik Eggers is being pursued by MI9 is because he knows some secret. That being the case, the day I obtain the bounty might be the last day of my life." Ian spread his hands.

"I'm not sure about that.

"But you can provide only clues."

"Good suggestion." Without asking any more questions, Klein spent five soli, replenished some of his ordinary ammunition, and left the Bravehearts Bar.

He got on the rental carriage and looked out the window at the gloomy weather. Suddenly, he felt a little wistful.

Kaspars Kalinin is dead which also means that Miss Sharron and Maric will give up this "base." With me only being able to contact them unilaterally, it'll be hard to find them...

Unless they encounter some difficulties that require my help, or they have reached the stage of dealing with the evil spirit buried in the ruins. Otherwise, I'll likely not be meeting them again.

Although they can't be considered friends, we've cooperated with each other twice. I could interact with them as a Beyonder without hiding my face. Now, there are two fewer people of such people.

If it wasn't for the Desire Apostle, I would only have an oddity like the vampire, Emlyn White, who I can talk about mysticism with without any disguises.

Thankfully. Thankfully...

As he was sighing silently, an ethereal voice suddenly sounded in his ears.

"Is there something?"

Klein instantly shuddered, and only when he saw who was sitting in front of him did he heave a sigh of relief. He laughed in exasperation and said, "Miss Sharron, do you always appear all of a sudden like this?"

Dressed in a Gothic regal dress and a matching soft black hat, Sharron was sitting quietly on the other side of the carriage, her face as pale as ever.

"I'll knock on the window next time." Sharron nodded without emotion.

She didn't repeat the question, but she looked quietly at Klein in a reserved manner.

Knocking on the window all of a sudden? That's equally scary... Klein was in no hurry to mention the matter about the Humanskinned

Shadow, and instead he asked, “Has the High-Sequence Beyonder left?”

“Yes,” Sharron said tersely.

Klein was slightly relieved as he warned her, “It could also be a trap.”

As he said this, he remembered something and quickly added, “I’ve finished reading the Book of Secrets, and I’ve obtained the corresponding information from other sources that praying to the Primordial Moon is prone to problems. It’s best not to try.” “Alright.” Sharron didn’t ask why.

She paused for a second and said in an ethereal voice, “The Primordial Moon and the Chained God seem to be archenemies.”

Because they can switch Sequences? Or could there be other reasons? Klein thought as he directed the conversation to what really mattered.

“Miss Sharron, do you know of any places with the characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow?”

Like a puppet, Sharron listened quietly before nodding her head.

“Yes.”

She knows? Klein was overjoyed, and quickly asked, "Where?"

In his heart, he was already prepared to pay the "consultation fee."

Sharron sat there without moving and said, like a talking doll, "In one of the gatherings that Maric participated in, someone once discovered the tomb of an ancient noble. They explored the periphery but didn't dare to venture deep, but there were traces of Human-skinned Shadow activity.

"They hoped to recruit a team strong enough to completely explore the tomb and split the valuables equally."

To seek help in a gathering of Beyonders who are not familiar with each other, how can all parties guarantee each other's credibility? What if there's no tomb at all, and it's just a trap? Klein quickly thought and asked in response, "Did they succeed?" "Yes," Sharron answered simply.

This... Klein temporarily didn't pursue the details. He suppressed his voice to avoid being overheard by the carriage driver.

"And then?"

"After that, they never appeared again," Sharron calmly recounted. "One of the members was a friend of Maric's, and he disappeared completely after that matter."

Without waiting for Klein to ask, she continued to speak with her ethereal voice.

"Maric found some of his friend's belongings. I used the method of divination to track them down to White Cliff Town, and I found a hidden entrance to the tomb at the riverbend of the Stratford River. Maric's friend was inside, but he was already dead."

"You went in?" Klein blurted out.

"No, I determined it using another method," Sharron explained. "That tomb gave me a sense of great danger. I didn't try to explore it."

At this point, she looked at Klein with her blue eyes.

"Without the help of a Sequence 4 Beyonder or a Sealed Artifact of a corresponding level, it would be best not to venture deep into that tomb."

Even you find it very dangerous. I don't need to go above the gray fog to divine it to know how terrifying it is... Klein looked down at the floor of the carriage and thought for a few seconds. "Do you know which ancient noble's tomb it belongs to?" Sharron did not pause in her reply.

"His last name is Amon."

Amon? A member of the family of that Amon who had possessed Little Sun's body and almost sneaked into the mysterious space above the gray fog? Klein used his ability as a Clown to control the slight twitch of his eyelids. He asked in puzzlement, "Are you sure?"

At this moment, a figure appeared in his mind—a black classic robe, a matching pointed hat, a broad forehead, a thin face, black eyes, black hair, and a crystal monocle.

Sharron's pale blonde hair shone through the mist like an oil painting drawn by a master, and she said in her usual flat tone, "According to the items obtained from the initial exploration, a member of the gathering who specializes in ancient history determined that the owner of the tomb came from the Tudor Dynasty of the Fourth Epoch. The family name is Amon."

It really is the Blasphemer family of the Fourth Epoch... This family isn't cursed like the Abraham family, nor was it destroyed directly by the Church of a certain goddess like the Antigonus family...

According to the special and powerful performance Amon showed in the City of Silver, the situation of this family might be comparable to that of Zaratul's. They were all secretly passed down, with the presence of High-Sequence Beyonders among their ranks, perhaps even with powerful angels. They protect certain crucial secrets, such as the "coordinates" of the Forsaken Land of God...

The danger of a tomb left behind by such a family can be imagined. Perhaps Amon can borrow the power of certain changes to cast his gaze over from the distant Forsaken Land of God... I can't use the

perspective of a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder to deduce the terror of a demigod...

Klein didn't ponder for long before denying the possibility of exploring the tomb of the Amon family.

Slightly disappointed, he looked up at Sharron.

"Is that place the only place with a Human-skinned Shadow?" Sharron shook her head.

"No."

"Oh?" Klein's eyes lit up, and he assumed a listening posture.

Sharron said, her voice unchanged, "I've participated in a gathering. A Beyonder promised that as long as someone completes a mission given by her, she would satisfy any reasonable request. When it comes to ingredients, it is limited to those below that of High-Sequence Beyonder ingredients."

"In other words, she can give any Beyonder ingredient below that of High-Sequence Beyonders?" The first thought that came to Klein's mind was: *is she bragging?*

Even for the Church of Evernight, only the Holy Cathedral, or in other words, the Cathedral of Serenity, would possess such a possibility!

Many of these ingredients weren't commonly needed because they weren't needed at all.

Upon hearing Klein's question, Sharron calmly replied, "She's a High-Sequence Beyonder."

High-Sequence Beyonder? No wonder... That would be on the level of the high-ranking members of the Churches or secret organizations. Even if they don't belong to any party, they would still build up their own faction! However, the promise of any type of Beyonder ingredient below a High-Sequence potion definitely can't be completely be met... Klein momentarily had such a thought.

Sharron simply added, "She said that certain ingredients would require a certain period of time."

That's more like it! Klein asked with interest, "What mission did she give?"

Sharron sat up straight and dignified.

"Investigate Hero Bandit Black Emperor's true identity."

"..."

Klein believed that if he had been drinking water at that moment, then he wouldn't have been able to control himself and that he would've sprayed it across from him.

Who did I offend? Why am I the target of a High-Sequence Beyonder? He first lamented in Chinese, then he quickly analyzed the possible parties.

Members of the Twilight Hermit Order? Because the Hero Bandit Black Emperor had killed the Desire Apostle, Beria?

Members of the Aurora Order? They drew links to The Fool from the tarot cards I left during the Capim incident, and they decided to investigate the Hero Bandit Black Emperor?

Members of the three Churches and MI9? Just to find out the truth about the Capim affair?

Every one of them is possible, and none of them can be ruled out! Klein didn't show any abnormalities as he deliberated and asked, "Why is she investigating the true identity of the Hero Bandit Black Emperor?"

"No one knows," Sharron replied in the simplest of terms.

Klein thought for two seconds and said after organizing his words, "What kind of person is she? I want to know if I should take this mission."

Sharron remained silent for two seconds, seemingly in recollection.

Then she described, "Female, above 1.70 meters tall, very wellproportioned, chestnut hair, was disguised, loves black leather boots, only occasionally attended the gatherings, and first appeared two months ago."

Loves wearing black leather boots, female, High-Sequence Beyonder... When these three keywords were put together, it immediately triggered a certain part of Klein's memories!

Back when he went to the Royal Museum to steal the Black Emperor card, he had met a mysterious High-Sequence Beyonder in the reconstructed study of Emperor Roselle. She only revealed her feet in black leather boots, and when he borrowed the power of the gray fog to escape, he ended up running into the Devil dog due to the side effects of the Master Key and had to shout for help. Therefore, Sherlock Moriarty ended up meeting the female demigod again.

Her? Why would she look for Hero Bandit Black Emperor? She's confirmed that the thief who stole the Card of Blasphemy is a Spirit Body and knows what would happen if a Spirit Body carries and contains the Black Emperor card. Hence, she has locked onto the Hero Bandit Black Emperor who has similar traits? Klein quickly thought of a very convincing possibility.

The only thing that confused him was how the other person knew that he had taken the Black Emperor card and not any other cards, such as the Abyss card or The Sun card.

Unless she was targeting the Card of Blasphemy, and she had investigated beforehand that it was the Black Emperor card... Well, Miss Sharron said that she joined the gathering for the first time more than two months ago. This matches the timing of Roselle's exhibition... Later, she occasionally participated without leaving Backlund, or perhaps, she returned regularly to search for the enemy who had taken the Black Emperor's card... Klein's thoughts blazed through his mind as he gave a faint smile.

"I'll keep an eye out for her. I hope there's something to be gained."

She can forget about getting anything her entire life! He added inwardly without hesitation.

Sharron nodded almost imperceptibly and said nothing more about the Human-skinned Shadow.

Obviously, she only had two leads, but it was still better than the Vampire Emlyn White and Eye of Wisdom Isengard Stanton's circle.

Klein slowly exhaled, concealing his inward disappointment, and said with a respectful tone, "You and Maric aren't troubled by the curse anymore, are you?"

"There's only one Scarlet Lunar Corona," Sharron answered calmly.

The person who wore the Scarlet Lunar Corona was immune to the full moon's effects, a dream item for Mutants.

That is to say, one will be fine, and one will be in the same situation as before... When affected by the full moon, Maric will be driven to insanity, while Miss Sharron will lose her strength. It appears Maric is the one using it... Klein thought as he changed topics.

"Have you found a way to remove a Rampager's mental corruption on the Beyonder characteristic left behind by Wraith Steve?"

He casually asked this question without much hope. In his heart, he believed that there was a greater chance with The Sun.

"No." Sharron appeared like she was talking about someone else.

Perhaps I will sell you this method in the future and hope that you have saved up your gold pounds... Klein tersely acknowledged and was suddenly unsure of how to continue the conversation.

He paused for a few seconds before asking, "Where is White Cliff Town?"

"Backlund suburbs, south of the bridge," Sharron answered succinctly.

She looked into Klein's eyes again.

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing." Klein first shook his head, and then asked, "Can I tell others about the tomb?"

"Sure."

Sharron's figure rapidly faded before she disappeared from the carriage.

Perhaps it was to conceal herself, as she never had the habit of using perfume; thus, leaving behind an empty environment once more.

8 p.m., Harvest Church.

After changing back into his usual attire, Klein looked around once as he pressed down on the edge of his hat. Then, he walked into the hall and headed for Emlyn White who was standing before three rows of candles on the right side of the hall.

At the vampire's feet was a black suitcase, its surface was seemingly covered with a layer of a wall of spirituality.

Upon sensing Detective Sherlock Moriarty coming in, Emlyn was first pleased before revealing an alarmed look.

He bent down to grab his suitcase and took a few steps back, closing the gap he had with Father Utravsky who was focused on praying.

Are you afraid that I'll rob you of the Beyonder ingredients... Klein stopped three meters away, then he smiled and said, "Let me first verify if it's the two ingredients I need."

Emlyn White ran his hand through his hair, lifted the leather case to his chest and undid the buckle.

The wall of spirituality shattered as a result, turning into a light breeze that blew through the prayer hall.

Klein, who had long activated his Spirit Vision, immediately saw bursts of strange and dazzling light. It was the spiritual radiance released by many Beyonder characteristics.

There were two small boxes inside the suitcase. One was made of tin and had many patterns on it. It looked spartan and heavy. The other was only a cardboard box.

Holding the black leather suitcase in one hand, Emlyn opened the slightly tarnished silver-colored tin case. The item inside looked like a yellowish brown peeled walnut with the grooves and ridges of a brain.

Along with the flickering of the candle flame, its appearance constantly changed. Sometimes it would turn gray and appear wrinkled. At other times, it would turn dark brown and extremely smooth. The colors would interweave, outlining a featureless "face."

At the sight of it, Klein felt the power of the potion, which he had completely digested and assimilated, stir a little, like a magnet encountering an opposite pole.

He was able to control his body with his Clown powers as he suppressed the feeling of attraction. He knew deep down that the item was a genuine mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter.

It seems like what Emperor Roselle speculated in his diary is possible, that High-Sequence items of the same pathway would unconsciously draw Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders to them, with a tendency to draw them together... Although the Thousandfaced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland is still very far from a High Sequence and doesn't have that kind of special force of attraction, it contains enough Beyonder characteristics. Moreover, I've digested the Sequence 7 potion. When the person and ingredients are sufficiently close, such a phenomenon will appear...

I didn't notice it before because, firstly, the corresponding Beyonder ingredients are of low quality, and secondly, my own strength is lacking, and I wasn't of a high enough Sequence... Right, every time I digested the potion, an illusory starry sky would appear around me. There were many resplendent lights within, and they would pull one another in an attempt to converge... This might be a scene of the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics of the same pathway, and the greater the "quality," the stronger the pull...

Then, will Beyonder characteristics of similar pathways conform to this law?

Klein's expression didn't change as he recalled the records in Roselle's diary, and combined with his three experiences of digesting potions, he was able to determine the existence of a certain law.

Emlyn White glanced at him warily, quickly closed the tin box and opened the paper box next to it.

The paper box was padded with thick cotton, and in the center of the box was a glass bottle that could hold 200 milliliters of liquid. The bottle was half-empty, while the rest of it was filled with a viscous liquid that could change its color based on the change of light.

“Any other problems?” Emlyn closed the paper box.

“Let me confirm once more.” Klein took out a gold coin and let it spin between his fingers, as though it had a life of its own.

Ding!

The gold coin bounced up and fell down again, landing in Klein’s palm.

It was heads, indicating a positive response.

Klein nodded slightly and took out stacks after stacks of notes from various pockets. They were in ten-pound, five-pound, and one-pounds denominations.

“1,450 pounds.” Klein placed the pile of cash on a nearby piece of furniture.

“Retreat a few steps, no, five steps!” Emlyn called out cautiously.

Klein smiled, raised his hands, and took five steps back.

Emlyn cautiously moved closer, checking to see if there was any blank paper in the stack of cash.

After doing a slight count, he threw the leather suitcase in his hand towards Klein.

Klein was startled and with his agile moves, he accurately caught the suitcase.

He was afraid that the blood of the Thousand-faced Hunter would seep out after the bottle shattered.

And Emlyn White took the opportunity to collect the bills and quickly retreated to the side of Father Utravsky.

Only then did he heave a sigh of relief and seriously checked the amount and their authenticity.

At the sight, Klein recalled the scene and suddenly felt ashamed.

He and Emlyn had made a perfectly fine Church of Earth Mother cathedral look like the scene of an arms or drugs trade...

After confirming the condition of the two ingredients, Klein snapped his fingers, igniting a match he had specially separated in his clothes and allowed the soaring red flames to envelop his body.

When the flames descended back down, he had already disappeared.

As he often met Emlyn White at the Harvest Church, he didn't mind if Father Utravsky found out that he was a Beyonder who had helped him eliminate his dark personality. He even felt that this would give him some form of friendship.

Emlyn, who was counting the money, looked up and was stunned for a good two seconds.

He muttered to himself in a low voice, "My suitcase...

"My tin box..."

...

On the lamp-lit street, a carriage rolled over the puddles and headed for the edge of Empress Borough.

Fors has told her good friend, Xio Derecha, that she had a teacher and had ended up consuming another Apprentice potion.

After confirming that she didn't have any signs of losing control, Xio looked outside the window at the gas lamps, which weren't much taller than she was, and asked in puzzlement, "I've always wondered why they're preserved as ingredients and not as a potion. Your teacher could've concocted the potion beforehand and brought them here, so there was no need for him to do it on the spot."

Fors gave a faint smile and said, "I've asked him about this before. He said that there are two main reasons. One is that different Beyonder ingredients have different uses, and when they're made into a potion, they cannot be used flexibly. The second is that when the Beyonder characteristics are solidified, they can be kept forever, but after it becomes a potion, that won't be the case unless one uses a special isolation technique."

"Why?" Xio asked in surprise. "This isn't an ordinary type of medicine or Beyonder weapon in which its spirituality will continue to dissipate and weaken."

Fors wasn't in the mood to laugh, but she had no choice but to maintain her smile.

"It's not a problem about the characteristic loss, but that once Beyonder ingredients become potions, not only can humans absorb them, even other creatures or materials without life can. It's just relatively slower. For example, if I use a glass bottle to store the potion, it might appear fine, but after a few days, the glass bottle would 'finish' drinking the potion, becoming a special mystical item. It might even gain intelligence. Of course, my teacher said that such a situation has very huge side effects, akin to what a Rampager leaves behind.

"The seven Churches and some hidden factions have special isolation techniques, but it's rather troublesome, and they won't use it on Low- or Mid-Sequence potions." "How amazing!" Xio sighed.

She took another look outside and said in a low voice, "We're almost there."

She and Fors were here to attend the Beyonder gathering which Mr. A was holding.

Fors smiled while feeling her heart bleed.

"I hope there's the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch."

Her teacher, Dorian Gray, had taught her the acting method before he left. He even gave her the potion formula for Trickmaster and got her to attempt to find the Beyonder ingredients on her own. If she hadn't gathered all of the ingredients by the time she digested the Apprentice potion, she could write to him for help.

This left Fors in a rather lost state.

Why did I spend large sums of money to purchase the Trickmaster formula and the acting method?

Up to now, the greatest and invaluable help the Tarot Club has given me were the things Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice taught me to take

note of, as well as Mr. Fool's interference in divination. Otherwise, Teacher would've long discovered a problem with me, and I wouldn't have become his student...

Sigh, I'll just consider it as the price for neutralizing the full moon's curse...

As the thought crossed her mind, Fors suddenly noticed that the house where Mr. A had his gathering held had visibly collapsed, and there were even scorch marks in many places.

There was a fierce battle here... Who dealt with Mr. A? An official organization? Fors immediately signaled to Xio and instructed the carriage driver outside, "Not here, two more streets up ahead."

...

"Aurora Order's base found. Terrorist organization suffers severe setback."

The next day, Klein saw this article the moment he flipped the newspapers open.

"Let's hope Mr. A died in this ambush." He drew the crimson moon on his chest in solemnity.

He had already thrown the Thousand-faced Hunter's blood and mutated pituitary gland from last night above the gray fog to ensure that they wouldn't be lost.

Even if I die, they won't be lost... Klein chewed on a piece of bacon with great ease.

After last night's transaction, his cash reserves had fallen back below 1,000 pounds, leaving him with only 735 pounds, which was only enough to buy a Deep-sea Naga's hair. After that, he didn't have the ability to purchase the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic.

Without any better clues or money, Klein rested at home the entire morning. After lunch, he dressed up and headed straight for the Backlund Bridge area.

He had previously made an agreement with Carlson of the Machinery Hivemind to find him at the Lucky Bar near the West Balam dock if

he had any intelligence. If the intelligence was especially important and Carlson wasn't there, he was to go straight to Lever Cathedral. After all, Sherlock Moriarty wasn't a member of a secret organization, so there was no need for caution.

There weren't many customers at Lucky Bar in the afternoon, so Klein instantly saw Carlson sitting and drinking alone in a corner of the bar.

He walked over, knocked on the table, and reported with a suppressed voice, "Many people in East Borough are spreading the faith of the original Creator."

Carlson sipped some alcohol brewed from pure malt and replied noncommittally, "I'm aware."

As expected... Klein commented silently before smiling.

"I have a clue regarding a Fourth Epoch tomb of a noble."

"Ah!"

The glass in Carlson's hand paused as he looked at Klein in surprise, and he unconsciously nudged his thick glasses.

But he noticed that Detective Sherlock Moriarty wasn't continuing to describe the matter, but looking at the bartender a few steps away while saying with a smile, "One glass of

Southville beer."

Chapter 436: Klein's Request

Seeing the white foam of the Southville beer being placed in front of Sherlock Moriarty, Carlson finally came to his senses.

It was only when the bartender was a certain distance away from them did he ask in a suppressed voice, "What do you want?"

Klein picked up his glass and took a sip. He took a few seconds to savor the bitter taste of the malt and the faint sweetness from it.

"Cheers!" He looked sideways at Carlson and smiled before raising his glass.

Without hesitation, Carlson shook his head and refused the offer, mumbling, "You have beer, while I have strong distilled liquor. It's not suitable for a toast."

Klein was only going through the motions, so he once again took a sip of his Southville beer, looked straight ahead, and chuckled.

"What I want is very simple.

"I'm not sure what's inside the tomb, so I can only describe it rather vaguely... Well, I hope that I can choose an item from the spoils of your tomb exploration. I'm not greedy, and my request will not involve high Sequence items. I wouldn't dare to take it even if they were one of the options.

"If you find nothing or there are only high Sequence items, then I don't want anything. Of course, I believe that when the latter happens, you wouldn't be stingy with giving me a sum of cash that's consistent with my contribution."

After hearing about the Amon family's tomb from Miss Sharron yesterday, he had came up with rough plans.

The first plan was to blow the copper whistle, contact Mr. Azik, and join forces to explore the tomb.

However, there were many potential problems with this plan. Firstly, he was unsure of the amount of strength Azik, who was still in the midst of finding his lost memories, had regained. Secondly, Azik was being pursued by MI9, so it was very easy for him and Azik to land in

trouble. Thirdly, there was a high chance that Klein would end up reappearing in the sights of Sealed Artifact 0-08 once again. Of course, he could also consider using the help of the gray fog to make contact or embark on the expedition. However, blowing the copper whistle above the gray fog made it impossible to summon the messenger; therefore, ending all of his subsequent plans.

More importantly, Klein didn't dare to reveal the secret of the space above the fog to Azik Eggers whose identity remained a mystery.

Therefore, he finally chose the second method, which was to use his identity as an informant to submit the information to the Machinery Hivemind and ask for a reasonable reward.

When it came to the number of High-Sequence Beyonders, which faction could have more than the seven Churches?

According to what Klein knew, there were close to ten HighSequence Beyonders in the Church of Evernight. In other words, nearly half of the thirteen archbishops and nine high-ranking deacons had reached or surpassed Sequence 4. This wasn't considering the Blessed of the Goddess, the Pope who helmed the Church.

Even if the situation regarding the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery was inferior in this aspect, it couldn't be that inferior. Their archbishop of the Backlund diocese, Horamick Haydn, was a High-Sequence Beyonder.

And as such, for an orthodox church, with all its resources accumulated to date, it wouldn't value the Mid-Sequence items very, very, very much. Klein believed that he could negotiate a reasonable "price."

Simply put, the core element of the second plan was: find an organization for any difficulties!

Upon hearing Klein's offer, Carlson paused for a second, then blurted out, "Aren't you a believer in God?"

I've always had the Goddess in my heart... Klein drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"It is because of my belief in God that I've told you this information, not to the Nighthawks through Mr. Stanton.

“God said to let those who wish to be strong, be strong. Only by becoming stronger and having more money can I have more access to different channels and resources, and thus provide you with better and more effective information.”

In order to convince the Machinery Hivemind, he had specifically spent the morning reading through the “Steam and Machinery Bible” that he had bought earlier. He then found a few sentences from the deity that met his requirements and memorized them.

Carlson was momentarily unable to provide a rejoinder. He just sat there, stunned, to the point of forgetting to drink.

Seeing this, Klein quickly added, “Moreover, this will help you establish a harmonious and efficient relationship with newgeneration informants. As long as you spread the news of the rewards I receive as a result of this, as well as keeping your promise without going back on your word, then I believe that the other informants will be deeply moved and be greatly motivated to do their best to gather useful information for you.

“Of course, I wish that you use my pseudonym when advertising this.”

Carlson listened with a blank face, picked up his glass, and gulped down a mouthful. He almost choked.

“Cough. Sherlock, the real you is completely different from what I remember about you from before.” He sighed.

The Detective Sherlock Moriarty in his memories was good at analysis and reasoning, he was extremely calm and polite, and, with a great sense of justice, had offered very effective advice. He was an outstanding believer in God.

Yet now, he was...

Klein took a sip of his beer and chuckled.

“Everyone has their different sides. Using a single facade to face everything is prone to error. This is a problem you have to pay attention to when making deductions.”

After calming down for a moment, Carlson stood up and said, “I have no right to agree to such a request. I will report it immediately, so wait here for a while.”

“Alright.” Klein waved to the bartender and added a serving of potato wedges.

By the time he leisurely finished his food and beer, Carlson returned to the bar with the deacon of the Machinery Hivemind, Ikanser Bernard.

Ikanser looked around, and seeing that there was no one around, he said in a deep voice, “There’s no problem with your request, but there’s one condition to add on—items with strong side effects and curses are not among the items available for selection.”

What I want is an ingredient... Klein immediately laughed.

“Alright!

“Dare I ask again if is this your personal decision or the response from the higher-ups?”

“I have the right to make such a decision.” Ikanser used his hat to press down on his fluffy hair. “But since it concerns an aristocratic tomb from the Fourth Epoch, I had sent a telegram to the archbishop, and he didn’t object to it in his reply.”

“Alright.” Klein drew another triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest. “I’ll give you the information now.” Ikanser shook his head subconsciously.

He looked around and pointed to a billiard room.

“Let’s talk inside.”

This deacon, who is always publicly placed on trial by the mirror called Arrodes, is quite experienced... Klein murmured and followed Ikanser and Carlson into the billiard room while making sure that the adjacent rooms were empty.

Klein paused for a few seconds and said with some deliberation, “The thing is, there was a Beyonder who found a hidden tomb at the mouth

of the Stratford River in White Cliff Town. He searched the periphery and found some items.

“After that, they recruited people and did further explorations, but no one returned. If you search carefully over there, you will definitely find the corresponding traces.”

After listening carefully, Ikanser asked, “Are you sure it’s an aristocratic tomb from the Fourth Epoch?”

“The items on the outside can prove that they’re members of the Tudor Dynasty’s Amon family,” Klein answered truthfully. He then warned him, “The Beyonders who died in there weren’t weak at all, and there were quite a few of them. I believe that this tomb isn’t something that can be explored by those below High-Sequence Beyonders.”

“Amon...” Ikanser frowned instinctively.

It could be seen that, as a deacon, he had the authority to know some ancient secret history.

Without waiting for Klein to emphasize it again, he looked up and said, “We will collect the relevant information first before we act.”

“A Fourth Epoch aristocratic tomb is very dangerous. Don’t tell this information to anyone else, or explore it yourself. Otherwise, you and your friends will only lose their lives.”

If I dared, I wouldn’t be sitting here... Klein gave a selfdeprecating laugh and said, “My reputation has always been good.”

After making the deal, he watched Ikanser and Carlson leave before putting on his hat and sauntering out of Lucky Bar.

Towards the nobles of the Fourth Epoch, as well as the Amon family, the Machinery Hivemind will still be very cautious. They’ll have to have at least several days of preparing before they take action... Prudence... Klein’s random thoughts froze on a single word.

He thought of another thing that could be described as being prudent.

After Roselle had joined the ancient organization suspected of being the Twilight Hermit Order, he had actually never mentioned its name

in his own secret diary which was written in Chinese. Each time, he would refer to it by referring to it with the appropriate characteristics.

This level of prudence was a very suspicious phenomenon!

Why didn't Emperor Roselle dare to mention the name of that organization, even when it's written in Chinese? This is completely different from the style of writing where he dared to write anything in his diary... What was he afraid of, or what was he worried about? Could it be that as long as he said or wrote down the name of the Twilight Hermit Order, then they would be made aware of it it no matter which language he used? Does one of their members or a Sealed Artifact they possess have such abilities? A guess popped up in Klein's mind, but there was no way to confirm it unless he was willing to take the risk.

I'll first assume it's true and that I haven't been perceived by them, because the channeling of the Desire Apostle's spirit had been done above the gray fog. Informing Miss Justice of it was also done in response to a prayer using the gray fog... Well, it's almost Monday, and I have to remind Miss Justice at the Tarot Club not to say or write down the name "Twilight Hermit Order." As for the reason, she can understand it by herself with me simply giving her a look... Klein quickly made his next arrangements and strode out of Lucky Bar.

Seeing that it was still early, he took a horse carriage to the Quelaag Club, intending to spend the afternoon there.

As soon as he entered the hall, he saw the equestrian teacher, Talim Dumont.

This descendant of blue-blood was seated in a corner, holding a glass of scarlet grape wine. His face was rosy, and he was sipping it in high spirits.

"You seem to be in a good mood, Talim," Klein smiled and greeted him.

Talim chuckled and said, "Because the new year is coming."

Then, rather excitedly, he asked, "Sherlock, do you know what it's like to really like someone?" "..." Klein showed a fake smile.

“I’m sorry, I’m still single.”

Talim finished the rest of his wine, stood up, waved his hand, and said, “That’s a pity. Well, I have to get busy.”

“By the way, thank you for introducing Mr. Framis Cage,” Klein recalled the investment of the bike project and sincerely expressed his gratitude. “When are you free these days? I’d like to get you to bring me around to sample some of Backlund’s

delicacies.”

“After the new year.” Talim put on his hat and walked with a smile to the reception hall.

Has this fellow entered the season of love? Klein couldn’t help but mutter.

Just as he turned around and took a few steps, he suddenly heard a heavy thud.

Klein jerked his head back and saw Talim Dumont on the ground, his left hand clamped tightly at his chest where his heart was. His body was convulsing nonstop.

This... Klein hurried over.

But at this moment, Talim had already spat out all of the white foam on his mouth, losing his last breath of life.

In just a few seconds, he had turned into a dead corpse.

This wasn't the first time Klein had seen someone familiar die in front of him, but it was the most abrupt and unforeseen death. The expression on Talim Dumont's face when he had asked about what it felt to really like someone was a vivid expression of hidden excitement and flaunting, but one which couldn't be directly shared due to the need of being careful as a result of certain factors.

That was too fast... Normal diseases do not cause death so quickly! Klein's expression was solemn as he lightly tapped his molars to activate his Spirit Vision.

He dropped to one knee and crouched down. He saw Talim Dumont's aura and the colors of his emotions fading rapidly.

Furthermore, there were strands of black gas wrapped around his heart like a snake which were gradually dimming.

A Beyonder ability similar to a curse? Klein instantly made a preliminary conclusion.

At this moment, a nearby red-vested attendant and a servant girl in a black-and-white dress ran over. They looked at the dead body on the ground in horror—his eyes were wide and round, and the corners of his mouth still had remnant white foam.

Klein closed his eyes and instructed in a deep voice, "Go to the nearby police station and tell them someone died here."

"Yes, Mr. Moriarty." The red-vested attendant immediately turned around and ran out the door, so flustered that he even forgot to put on his coat.

Under the watchful gaze of the crowd, Klein didn't check Talim's belongings, nor did he try to pull out a few strands of hair for a divination attempt when he wasn't around anyone.

His identity was already considered semi-official, so he could use the power of the Machinery Hivemind to conduct a follow-up investigation. There was no need for him to act as a lone hero.

Thinking of the many times he had played cards with Talim Dumont, and how he had introduced clients and investors, and the love story that had been hanging in his mind for so long, Klein couldn't help but take a long, slow, deep breath.

Who's Talim's murderer?

Which Beyonder, who's adept at curses, did Talim offend?

Judging from his attitude today, he should be in a very happy and calm state, completely unaware of the fact that he has provoked a terrifying character...

Questions flashed through Klein's mind, but his lack of understanding about Talim Dumont resulted in a lack of soil to nurture any inspiration.

When the police arrived, he was questioned as a witness and that wasted quite a bit of his time.

It wasn't until all of this was over that Klein had a chance to leave Hillston Borough and head back to Lucky Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

Carlson was still there drinking; the only difference being that his drink had been exchanged from a strong distilled liquor made from pure malt to golden, frothy beer.

Klein raised his right hand, covered his mouth, and squeezed over. He lightly knocked on the table and said, "Is your job to drink here every day?"

Carlson jumped in fright as he turned his head, relaxing only when he saw that it was Sherlock Moriarty.

"You... What is it now?"

This reaction is very familiar... Klein sighed silently and said gravely, "There is a case involving Beyonders."

Carlson looked around and saw that Lucky Bar already had quite a number of patrons. They were either hollering over their glasses or eager to fight in the ring.

“Follow me, let’s play a round of billiards.” Carlson nudged his thick glasses and carried his beer to an empty billiard room.

Klein followed, closing the door behind him.

“Your alcohol tolerance seems pretty good,” he said in passing.

“No, I just drink very slowly.” Carlson put down his glass and picked up the cue stick.

Then, he added inexplicably, “And I’d like some alone time

lately.”

I don’t care about that... Klein pursed his lips and said, “I encountered a death at the Quelaag Club in Hillston Borough. That was a friend of mine, a noble descendant, and an equestrian teacher. He’s usually healthy and had recently been in a very good mental state, but just now, he suddenly died in front of me. It looked like a heart attack, but my Spirit Vision told me that he might’ve been cursed.”

“You’re adept at Spirit Vision?” Carlson asked subconsciously.

What sort of details did Mr. Stanton fabricate for me? After becoming a Machinery Hivemind informant, they never even asked me which pathway I was, or which Sequence I’m at, nor did they try to find out about my origins and background... Of course, letting an informant keep certain secrets of their own is also a common tactic used by official organizations... Klein frankly responded, “Yes, the chest of the deceased had some decaying, illusory black gas.”

“It does involve the possibility of a curse and a Beyonder.” Carlson didn’t ask further as he slowly nodded. “Hillston Borough... That’s the territory of our Machinery Hivemind.”

In the northwest of Backlund, which was the heart of the metropolis, Empress Borough and Cherwood Borough came under the Mandated Punisher’s jurisdiction. The western and northern areas came under the Nighthawks, and Hillston Borough and Backlund Bridge area came under the Machinery Hivemind.

Having said this, Carlson looked at Klein and attempted to confirm the details.

“What deity does your friend believe in?”

After thinking carefully for a few seconds, Klein replied hesitantly, “The Lord of Storms.”

“A believer of the Lord of Storms... Is he the only deceased?” Carlson asked with a frown.

“Yes,” Klein gave an affirmative answer.

Carlson chalked the cue stick and sighed.

“We have no right to take the case. This is under the Mandated Punishers.

“But I will pass on your information to them.”

In the Loen Kingdom, the principle of jurisdiction over Beyonder events was first to divide them according to their beliefs. If they involved the followers of multiple deities, then it would be decided according to who held jurisdiction over the area.

Klein was no stranger to this. He had no intention of making things difficult for Carlson, so he earnestly said, “Thank you. I hope they can find the real killer as soon as possible.”

Carlson picked up the glass of beer beside him and took a sip. “He’s a descendant of blue-blood. The Mandated Punishers will definitely take it seriously.”

Pausing for a second, he looked at Klein and said in a low voice, “I find it hard to believe that you’ve only been in Backlund for about three months.

“You seem to have established a wide range of social connections and possess lots of resources here.”

“Some people are naturally adept at this.” Klein shook his head with a self-deprecating laugh before bidding farewell.

By the time he got back to Minsk Street, it was completely dark and the gas lamps lining the streets were being lit by workers.

Although his relationship with Talim Dumont didn’t go deep, he was an acquaintance he met nearly every week. He was a friend he would

play cards with every now and then, and Talim was rather warm and had always exalted him as a great detective. Furthermore, he had practiced what he preached by introducing clients and investors.

His passing also made Klein feel sad, making him fully aware of his helplessness towards fate.

Other than that, he was also very angry. He was angry at the murderer who had cursed Talim to death.

I hope that they can figure out what happened. I hope that the

Mandated Punishers doesn't run out of manpower because of Duke Negan's assassination case... Klein sighed as he got off the carriage and walked towards the gate.

In the process, he discovered that there was no light at the Sammers house next door.

It looks like they're on their way to Desi Bay... Is this the new year atmosphere in Backlund? Yet, I don't feel anything at all... Klein momentarily felt melancholic.

With these emotions in mind, he went to bed early and woke up at seven in the morning.

In an attempt to change his mood, Klein decided to bake a homemade cake today.

"I'll buy the ingredients after breakfast," he whispered, drinking his milk and flipping through the newspapers.

Soon, he saw an "obituary" in the Tussock Times: "My beloved son, Talim Dumont, passed away on 18 December due to a sudden heart disease. His funeral will be held at the Crown Cemetery at exactly 9 a.m. on 21 December."

In the Northern Continent, due to reanimations, it was already an ancient tradition to be buried as quickly as possible after one's death. Of course, this was on the premise that there was no shortage of money for a funeral.

Sudden heart disease? Is this the final result of the investigation? Or could it be that the Mandated Punishers are trying to lull the culprit? Klein frowned, unable to make a judgment.

Perhaps I can go above the gray fog to see if it's a trap set up by the Mandated Punishers, but there's a high probability of failure. After all, I don't have one of his items with me, nor was I targeted... He took a breath, calmed down, and methodically filled his stomach.

The subsequent attempt didn't exceed Klein's expectations. He could only leave Minsk Street and take a bus to Hillston Borough to visit Isengard Stanton.

The great detective walked in the warm room, pointed to the front, and said, "Sherlock, would you like some breakfast? My chef's skills aren't worse than mine."

"No, I've already had breakfast," Klein shook his head and declined.

Isengard stopped in his tracks and casually asked, "Where are you going to spend the new year's? I'm planning on, no— returning to Lenburg."

"I haven't confirmed it yet. Perhaps Midseashire," Klein said, perfunctorily.

"The scenery there was originally pretty good, but unfortunately, there's an abundance in coal and iron resources, there was also a rather developed shipping industry." Isengard straightened his collar and touched the pipe in his pocket. "You seem to be a little anxious?"

"Mr. Stanton, I have something to ask you." Klein took the opportunity when asked the question to relate, in detail, Talim Dumont's death, the results of his Spirit Vision, his advice to the Machinery Hivemind, and what he had seen in this morning's obituary.

Of course, he had hidden the fact that he had become an informant for the Machinery Hivemind. He only said that for his friend, he had found an official Beyonder he got to know due to the Desire Apostle case.

"Do you think this is a trap by the Mandated Punishers?" he finally asked.

Holding the pipe, Isengard said thoughtfully, “I’ve been trying to avoid the Mandated Punishers, and I don’t know enough about the situation.

“I’ll get someone to find out. If there’s any news, then I’ll write to you.”

“Okay, thank you.” Klein bowed sincerely.

In the evening, he received a letter specially sent from Isengard. There were only two sentences in the letter: “This case isn’t handled by the Mandated Punishers. The royal family has taken the case by claiming that Talim Dumont is a noble.”

Chapter 438: Invitation

The royal family... Klein held the letter he received from Isengard Stanton and silently murmured to himself.

He looked up and outside the window, and he saw the rain pattering down. The gas lamps on the streets were giving off quiet halos.

Inside the living room, the coffee table was neat and tidy, with a few stacks of newspapers placed in the corner. There was silence all around him.

Klein sat on the sofa as he leaned forward a little. He sat there silently for a long time.

After nearly ten minutes, he exhaled and shook his head. Slowly and heavily, he tossed the letter into the trash can.

He slowly stood up and expressionlessly walked to the second floor.

And in the trash can, Isengard Stanton's letter caught fire silently and quickly crumpled into black ashes.

...

On Monday morning, Klein stood in front of the mirror, pressed his right thumb and middle finger to his temples, and rubbed them with a little more strength.

When he was done, he turned on the faucet, lowered his body, splashed the cold tap water onto his face, and washed his face while having a fit at the cold.

After freshening himself up, he hung up the towel, walked to the first floor, and simply made a single-sided, well-done fried eggs with buttered toast.

Of course, a cup of black tea with a few slices of lemon quenched his thirst and reduced the cloy sensation he was feeling.

After breakfast, as he was idly flipping through the rest of the newspapers, Klein suddenly heard the tinkling of the doorbell.

Who is it? A new commission? Could it be that the Machinery Hivemind has already finished exploring the Amon family's tomb? No,

it can't be that fast... Klein muttered as he put away his napkin and newspapers and walked slowly to the door.

When he held the handle, the image of the visitor outside the door appeared in his mind.

It was an elderly gentleman dressed to a tee. His snow-white shirt was starched, and a thick grayish-blue vest completely hid his belly. The long tailcoat had sharp lines without any blemishes on it.

The gentleman was wearing a pair of shiny leather shoes, so shiny that it was impossible to tell if he had walked through the rain or mud.

He wore a pair of white knitted gloves, with silver hair at his temples. His face was deeply wrinkled, and his light brown eyes were so serious that they didn't contain a hint of a smile.

I don't know him... Klein mumbled and opened the door.

"May I know who you're looking for?" he asked politely.

The elderly gentleman took off his hat, pressed it to his chest, and saluted in the most standard manner.

"Mr. Sherlock Moriarty, I'm a butler who has come to invite you in place of my master."

"Do I know your esteemed master? Why is he looking for me?" Klein's head was completely filled with questions.

But at this moment, he had already noticed a carriage parked across the cement road. It had a deep black outer shell, and there was a curtain on the inside of the window. It was obvious that it was nothing ordinary.

There's luxury amidst being low-key... Klein looked closely and suddenly saw that there was a coat of arms in a conspicuous part of the carriage.

The main body of the coat of arms was a vertical sword facing down, and the hilt of the sword had a red crown.

That's the... Sword of Judgment... It's the Sword of Judgment representing the royal Augustus family! Klein's heart palpitated as he roughly understood the butler's background.

Perhaps he's a rather powerful Beyonder... Klein made a guess.

The professional and stern butler didn't pay attention to his scrutiny. He revealed a polite smile and said, "You have never met my master, but in a sense, you do know him. You have been providing him clues about the organization that is symbolized by the tarot cards, and he has paid for the money you need."

As expected, it's the important figure that Talim mentioned. I've been using false information to fleece for funds and even submitted all the reimbursements that Old Kohler required to him... I can't refuse his invitation now, especially when Talim is dead... Klein pondered for two seconds and said, "Did your master come to me due to Talim's death?"

"Yes, Talim was his friend. He was sad and confused by his death, and he heard that you were there when it happened," the old butler articulated clearly.

No, I wasn't... Klein subconsciously wanted to deny it, but he ultimately could only nod.

"Yes, I saw Talim die in front of me."

"It's really a sad and regretful thing," the butler said in a sincere tone. "Are you willing to accept my master's invitation?"

Do I have any reason to refuse? That would just make me look very suspicious! I might even be killed on the spot by you... Klein looked at him and said, "I happen to have nothing planned this morning."

"Alright then. Mr. Moriarty, please." The old butler bent down slightly, extended his right white-gloved hand, and pointed at the carriage on the opposite side of the cement road.

Sigh, I've been trying to avoid getting involved with important figures. In the end, I have no choice but to face the person behind Talim after his death... I wonder if this would attract attention or lead to more in-depth background checks... I have to plan ahead and be ready to give up my identity and this foothold at any time... Also, I need to get the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and the Deep-sea Naga's hair and advance to Faceless as soon as possible! In that case, my ability to resist risks would more than double! When Klein put on his coat and

hat and walked to the carriage with the royal coat of arms, he had already thought of the subsequent developments.

At this moment, the servant the old butler brought with him opened the door for him.

Stepping on the thick brown carpet, Klein looked at the wooden cabinets containing red wine, white wine, champagne, Lanti, and Black Rand, along with the crystal glasses. Klein felt rather restricted as he sat by the window.

Lanti referred to strong distilled spirits made from pure malt. There were many types, such as the sailors' favorite Lanti Proof. The bottles displayed in the cabinets were obviously of high quality. As for Black Rand, they referred to strong distilled wines mixed with other fermented grains, which, like Lanti, was something unique to Loen.

As the carriage drove through the wet streets, Klein asked in passing, "Are we going to Empress Borough?"

"No, my master is waiting for you at the Red Rose Manor on the outskirts of Empress Borough." The old butler didn't hide anything.

Looks like this is the royal family's manor... Klein thought for a moment, then he asked with a smile, "Can you tell me your master's identity now?"

The old housekeeper's back, which was already straight, became even straighter as he raised his chin.

"He is the descendant of the Founder and Protector. He's the grandson of the Might-wielder, the fifth son of His Majesty, Earl of Lastings, His Highness Prince Edessak Augustus."

So it's the third prince, the second youngest prince, but he should be around 21 to 22 years old... Klein recalled what he had seen in the occasional descriptions in the newspapers and magazines at the Quelaag Club.

The horse carriage passed through one street after another, going from an artificial lake to the northwest. After more than an hour, they finally arrived at an extremely large manor.

At the entrance to the manor, Klein was inspected by two soldiers in red military uniforms and white trousers. He didn't hide the existence of his gun holster and revolver.

He believed that there were definitely people around Prince Edessak who could tell that he was carrying a gun, and that it easily made things worse if he fooled them with illusions.

In any case, the prince knows that I'm a private detective, so his subordinates definitely wouldn't send guests to the police station just because I was illegally in possession of a gun... Klein watched as the soldier took the gun holster and revolver before he was informed to take it when he came out.

After two more inspections, Klein followed the old butler, went around the main house, and came to a wide area with hills and flowing waters.

The only drawback of this place was that the vegetation had long since withered away in the dead of winter, leaving nothing but desolation.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Several horses came running from the distance and stopped in front of them.

A young man in white trousers, high-heeled black boots, a fitted shirt, and a dark rider's tunic nimbly dismounted and walked over. Everyone else followed closely by his side.

He removed his helmet from his head and smiled at Klein.

"I'm finally meeting you, Detective Moriarty."

Upon seeing this, Klein's eyes lit up. It wasn't because of how handsome he was, but because he looked like the Henry Augustus I imprinted on five-pound notes.

Edessak Augustus also had a rotund face and a pair of slender eyes, but he didn't look serious at all. Instead, he always had a smile on his face, looking young and spirited.

"I didn't know that you, Your Highness, were the one who entrusted me with the task." Klein bowed.

Holding a horsewhip in his hand, Edessak weighed it in his palm and chuckled.

“I heard that you played an important role in the serial killer and Desire Apostle cases. Talim’s recommendation was indeed good. Sigh, who knew that he would be gone days after I was horse racing with him. He has gone to the kingdom of storm and lightning.”

Since the founding of the kingdom, the Augustus family had always believed in the Lord of the Storms.

Without waiting for Klein to answer, he said with a heavy expression, “The investigation into Talim’s death didn’t go through me, Mr. Moriarty. I want you to help me discover the truth.”

The conclusion given by the rest of the royal family? Your two elder brothers? This sudden level of in-fighting isn’t something I can handle... Also, Your Highness, your style is really direct... Klein sighed.

“I’m sorry, but I’d still say that Talim died of a sudden heart disease.”

“Is that so? News came from the Mandated Punishers that a detective by the name of Sherlock Moriarty had testified that Talim had signs of suffering from a curse.” Prince Edessak chuckled.

Klein could only respond with a wry smile, “Your Highness, you should know the principles I adhere to, I still wish to live another fifty years.”

“Wasn’t Talim your friend?” Prince Edessak asked.

Klein was at a loss for an answer when a maid suddenly came from the main room, quickly approached the prince, and whispered a few words.

Edessak’s face stiffened.

“Tell her that she’s not to go out!”

After he finished speaking, he took two steps forward. His serious expression softened, and a hint of softness and helplessness appeared in his blue eyes.

“But I will permit her to leave the room and walk around freely in the manor.”

The scene before his eyes reminded Klein of the romance story which Talim Dumont had told him.

His noble friend had fallen in love with a commoner woman and was insistent on marrying her. However, being in the top circle of the aristocracy, the marriage was absolutely prohibited. Talim had been vexed over this matter, and he had even considered the prospect of hiring a murderer, but in the end, he managed to persuade the woman to leave his friend on her own accord.

Could the main character of this story be Edessak Augustus? The situation is very consistent in all aspects. As a prince, marrying a commoner is practically treason in this era. Since the founding of Loen, the spouse of a direct descendant of the Augustus Family could only be a noblewoman... From what I've just heard, Edessak has brought that commoner woman back? And he has even grounded her as punishment? True love... In a split-second, the story of a tyrannical prince and a pitiful frail white flower took shape in Klein's mind.

He looked into the distance, enjoying the midwinter scenery.

"That's not what it really looks like. When spring comes and the grass sprouts, you'll see a golf course of the highest quality." Prince Edessak dismissed the maid, raised his whip, and pointed around.

"Golf?" Klein asked, simultaneously knowing the answer to his question.

Prince Edessak motioned his guards and attendants away, leaving the old butler and Klein to follow him by his side.

He strolled on the desolate plains, chuckled, and said, "Yes, golf. This is a truly aristocratic sport that even the owners of most magazines and newspapers have a hard time getting involved in.

"Although I don't like Roselle, I have to admit that the fantasylike ideas he had have given us a world with plenty of fun. If you can figure out the truth to Talim's death, this place will always be open to you."

It was indeed Roselle... Klein let out a light breath.

Seeing that he didn't respond, Prince Edessak continued to lament.

"There is much to learn from Roselle in every way, but his attitude towards feelings makes me sick. Of course, this is the common nature and style of most of the Intis aristocrats, and it's also the source of their infatuation with luxury and debauchery in their lives."

Looking ahead at the slow stream, Edessak said in a mature tone that was beyond his years, "Ninety-nine percent of people are not geniuses like Roselle. In order to succeed and establish a great enterprise, one must first understand what they really want, and for that, they must be willing to pay the price and never turn back while persisting all the way."

As he said this, his tone became slow as he laughed at himself and said, "Before this year, I had always thought that I liked the daughter of Earl Hall very much. She has perfect looks, an elegant demeanor, a rich fortune, a distinguished family, and a very powerful father. She's someone that no prince can find fault with, but now I understand that what I'm really attracted to is something that I yearn to have even in my dreams; it's a unique temperament and profound soul born from experience. Heh, I'm not saying that Miss Hall is lacking in temperament, but that wasn't what I want, admire, or like."

Your Highness, your tone, attitude, and expression are now almost identical to Talim just before he died... Don't suddenly die in front of me. Even if I were to jump into the Tussock [1] *River, there's no way for me to prove my innocence... Moreover, hearing much of this makes it easier for me to be silenced. Do you want to tie me to your chariot...* Klein felt a little afraid for some baffling reason.

He cleared his throat and took the initiative to change the subject.

"Your Highness, with your status and identity, you will certainly not lack subordinates. There are many people who are willing to investigate Talim's death for you, so why do you need me?" Edessak shook his head and chuckled.

"As a prince, I have as much power as the little freedom I have. There are many things I can't let the people around me do, as there are too many eyes on me.

"You're a great detective with brains, and you have a good relationship with Talim. You were there at the time, so I don't think there's anyone better suited than you.

"Don't worry, if there really is a problem, then I can definitely guarantee your safety."

Such a promise is like toilet paper in the bathroom... Klein couldn't help but silently lampoon.

With Prince Edessak already saying this much, he felt that there was little chance of him leaving Red Rose Manor if he refused again. He could only sigh and say, "Actually, I'm as angry as you are about Talim's death, but reality has kept me calm." Edessak smiled.

"What can I do for you?"

"Talim's hair, either his flesh and blood, plus something he carried around with him." Klein made the request.

"Okay, then I'll have these delivered to your house." Edessak agreed at once, and then asked curiously, "That's all?" Klein didn't stand on ceremony.

"I will only know what kind of help I need when I have a preliminary lead. Your Highness, it's best that you give me a way to communicate with you. A private detective who frequently visits this manor would definitely arouse suspicion."

Edessak nodded and said as if he was prepared, "I'll have someone secretly rent the house next door to you, 13 Minsk Street. When you need to make contact, write a letter to your neighbor about visiting and put it in the mailbox. As for the reward, you should know that I'm not a stingy person, even if it ends in failure. As long as you contribute and take the risk, you will still receive the corresponding income. If you do find out the truth, I'll give you a reward sufficient for your retirement."

This prince does things really swiftly and decisively... Retirement, that would be at least 3,000 pounds... Klein secretly sighed.

"Alright, may the spirit of Talim be at peace in the kingdom of storm and lightning." He bowed.

Edessak nodded slightly and instructed his elderly butler, “Take Detective Moriarty out and back to Minsk Street.”

Why don’t you keep me for lunch? Aren’t you treating your guest in a little too arrogant a manner? Of course, it probably has to do with it being a long time before noon... Klein silently teased him.

He followed the old butler all the way out to the entrance of the manor and retrieved the gun holster, revolver, and the bullets.

...

At 15 Minsk Street, Klein stood at the oriel window and watched the carriage with the royal coat of arms drive away.

Sherlock Moriarty might die at any moment if the investigations really goes deeper... Who knows, someone might be watching me right now... Hmm, not for now, since I haven’t made any moves yet... Klein frowned and stood still.

At this moment, he was extremely eager to advance to Faceless.

I can’t afford to wait for the Machinery Hivemind’s exploration of the Amon family’s tomb. I have to continue trying to buy the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic via other channels. After all, no one knows how long the Machinery Hivemind’s preparations will take. What if it exceeds a month or even half a year? That’s not impossible. They can first send people to guard the entrance and slowly gather the corresponding information so as to be certain that nothing goes wrong. It’s not a bad strategy, but that’s not something that I can afford to wait for... As thoughts raced through Klein’s mind, he made his decision.

At 2:45 p.m., he brought his newspaper into the bathroom and actively prepared for this week’s Tarot Gathering.

Three o’clock sharp.

A deep red illusory radiance rose as Audrey Hall looked around in a good mood.

Last night, she had finally received the Sequence 7 Psychiatrist potion formula she had been dreaming of. Her emotions were still a mix of excitement, agitation, and serenity. Furthermore, the Psychology

Alchemists hadn't immediately asked her to make any contributions, claiming that it was an advance.

They had full confidence in Miss Audrey's outstanding ability to "repay" them.

No new members... Audrey stood up and gazed at the very end of the long bronze table. She raised the corners of her skirt and bowed.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~ Good afternoon..."

Her light and cheerful voice broke the unchanging silence above the fog, and it allowed Klein, who had been feeling a little depressed, to temporarily be rid of the troubles that the outside world had on him.

He nodded slightly and responded to the members' greetings.

When she sat down again, Audrey brought the other members into view and created a dynamic scene with the previous observations.

When bowing, Mr. Hanged Man silently sized up Mr. Fool with inconspicuous curiosity. Then, he looked towards Mr. World in anticipation... In other words, with him having a deep relationship with the Church of Storms, he knows about the details of Duke Negan's assassination and is aware of the appearance of Hero Bandit Black Emperor. He has the desire to investigate the hidden truth behind this matter... There appears to be an outcome regarding the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic which Mr. World had entrusted him to sell, and he has also probably found the Human-skinned Shadow characteristics or the Deep-sea Naga's hair...

The Sun's emotions are very stable and relaxed. This means that he believes that the City of Silver's surveillance on him has been lifted... What did he rely on to make this judgment? Has he been reallocated to the so-called exploratory teams?

Fors is a little depressed despite feeling relaxed... She passed the Abraham family member's test and has become his student, but she was forced to accept something that was disadvantageous to her?

Mr. World is as cold and deep as ever... Perhaps when I reach Sequence 7 or 6, I'll be able to grasp his emotional changes and thoughts...

Well, The Fool is still as mysterious, powerful, and unfathomable.

A series of thoughts flashed through Audrey's mind. She looked at the figure shrouded in the gray fog and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I have obtained three new pages of Roselle's diary."

It was a copy she had requested from the Psychology Alchemists. However, as she had only mentioned it last night, Escalante only had the time to give her three pages in such short notice.

"What kind of reward do you want?" Klein asked with a smile.

Audrey replied sincerely, "Can you just treat it as the reward for answering my previous question?"

As she said this, she had an inexplicable feeling of flaunting herself.

Mr. Hanged Man and the rest of you still don't know the existence of the Twilight Hermit Order!

Phew, how envious. I wonder what problem did Miss Justice seek guidance for in private... I'll write to Teacher when I get back, and I'll ask him if he has Roselle's diary, no—to the outside world, notebook. Fors immediately had the desire and motivation.

Under The Hanged Man's suspicious gaze, Klein nodded without any care.

"Sure."

Audrey quickly produced three pages of tawny diary entries and passed them on to Mr. Fool.

Klein took them and read them. On the first page, it wrote: "13th January, contact with Mr. Door stabilized."

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1. This is a Chinese proverb, which involves jumping into the Yellow River.

Just as Klein picked up the diary, Audrey added, “Mr. Fool, I still have ten diary pages which will be given to you later. It is for the payment for your previous blessing.”

She repeated her private promise so as to not let Mr. Fool think that she had forgotten about it, and the reason why she had provided payment for the information regarding the Twilight Hermit Order was to first settle the “debt” while having the intention to show off a little.

The payment for the blessing... Fors ruminated over these words and suddenly realized an important oversight on her part.

On the matter regarding the Abraham family, Mr. Fool had sent his angel to help me interfere with the divination! I should’ve paid an appropriate amount... Oh no, I didn’t realize this at all... I thought, like all rituals, that it was the end to it once it was completed... For a moment, Fors fell into a panic.

During ordinary ritualistic magic, if one prayed for help from a deity or a corresponding existence, they would perform a sacrifice in advance. Burning essential oils, extracts, and herbal essence that pleased the target was equivalent to making an advanced payment, but in the rituals corresponding to The Fool, there were many steps that could be omitted, and the price could only be paid afterward. Sometimes, there wasn’t even a need to offer anything. Fors, who was accustomed to the former, ended up only saying a word of thanks.

She hurriedly looked towards the end of the long bronze table and earnestly said, “Honorable Mr. Fool, your divination interference had helped me greatly. I will try to find ten Roselle diary pages as soon as possible as well.”

Seeing the performance of Miss Justice and Miss Magician, it dawned on Derrick Berg that he had found a way to fully express his gratitude.

However, the City of Silver doesn’t have the diary pages of the socalled Emperor Roselle... Well, Mr. Fool is very interested in history, so I’ll have to read more books and records on these... With a thought, Derrick made a promise to Mr. Fool who sat high above them.

The Hanged Man watched all this from the side and had no doubt that The Fool had an angel at his service.

Any organization should have a character like Miss Justice... The power of a role model is limitless... With a lot of "debts" to collect appearing out of thin air, Klein happily sighed inwardly.

As the high and mighty Mr. Fool, he always found it awkward to directly ask for compensation, and he had always believed that helping the members of his own organization was a normal and reasonable thing to do, without the need for him to make it so reliant on transactions. Thus, he didn't control The World to put on the appropriate performance to remind everyone.

Of course, if Justice and the others were willing to provide payment, then Klein had no intention of refusing it.

"Alright." He smiled and nodded before shifting his gaze back to the diary in his hands.

"13th January, contact with Mr. Door stabilized.

"The powerful Beyonder, who's lost in the darkness and trapped in the storm, didn't rush me to complete a complicated and difficult ritual so as to help him return to the real world.

"He seems to have understood that he has to come up with something that would move me, instead of giving me three intangible wishes, in order for me to consider whether I should take the hidden risks of saving him.

"Mr. Door temporarily didn't mention this matter and instead, with great interest, chatted about my tarot card creation. Heh heh. The word 'creation' should be written with quotation marks. From this point, it's apparent that Mr. Door is able to make contact with the real world at particular times and through particular methods, and he should be able to observe a lot of details.

"While talking about 'The Moon' card, I thought of a matter Zaratul mentioned. He said that the Life School of Thought worships the moon, but not the Evernight Goddess. Yes, I added the second half myself!

"Hence, I asked the Fourth Epoch expert, Mr. Door, about this question. He chuckled and similarly didn't give a direct answer. However, compared to the furtive Seer who speaks half-truths, making me want to beat him up, he's a lot more frank.

"He told me that if he were to choose a card from the tarot cards to represent the Evernight Goddess, he wouldn't choose The Moon, but—

"The Star!

"That makes things very interesting. I pressed, 'Who is the real owner of The Moon? His reply was even more worthy of relish. "He said with a laugh that The Moon currently has no owner.

"If I didn't misunderstand him, then he means that the peak of The Moon's pathway is empty. The Sequence 0 is empty!"

That's not right. Isn't there a Primordial Moon? Upon seeing this, Klein suddenly had this thought.

He had already anticipated that the "The Moon" card didn't represent the Goddess. Whether it was the faith of the Life School of Thought, the attitude of the vampires, or the records in the Book of Secrets, they all vaguely pointed out that Evernight wasn't the Moon.

In contrast, Vampire Ancestor Lilith and the Primordial Moon resembled the Sequence 0 of this pathway in more ways.

According to the City of Silver's history lessons, Lilith had most likely fallen in the Dark Epoch, the Second Epoch. However, the Primordial Moon was an existence that people still believed in and sent responses to even to this day. Of course, those who prayed to "Her" wouldn't end up well... Why did Mr. Door say that The Moon had no owner at the moment? As seen from the Book of Secrets, the Primordial Moon still existed during the Fourth Epoch... Klein almost frowned.

Soon, he came up with three guesses. *First, Mr. Door didn't know enough about the hidden Primordial Moon, but that was a very low possibility; second, that the Primordial Moon was actually the disguise of another deity, not essentially occupying the position of The Moon's Sequence 0 pathway; third, that "She" was a Sequence 1 of The*

Moon's pathway or was in disguise and had the corresponding Sealed Artifact.

And one more possibility, it's the response from The Moon pathway's "Uniqueness." Klein muttered silently.

The most important Beyonder ingredient in the Sequence 0 potion formula described by the Black Emperor card wasn't all of the Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics, but something called Uniqueness. Different pathways had different Uniquenesses.

A true god was unique!

Other than the first guess, the other possibilities aren't small... What is the Beyonder pathway of The Moon? Klein turned to the second page of the diary and was lucky enough to discover that it was connected to the previous page.

"I continued pressing, but Mr. Door refused to say more. Heh, he thinks that I'll rescue him by whetting my appetite? Dream on!

"I hid my curiosity and scoffed at Mr. Door for not being respectful enough to true gods. He casually, yes—casually replied to me. *This is the attitude a Fourth Epoch noble has to the deities.*

"This guy is too good at acting! However, I really am interested in the nobility of the Fourth Epoch, so I took the opportunity to ask.

"Mr. Door told me that in the Tudor Dynasty, there were five noble families—Abraham, Antigonus, Amon, Tamara, and Jacob. Each family was known as an Angel Family, and they possessed tremendously terrifying strength.

"Angel Family, just the name itself raises many problems. It really makes one yearn for it! Mr. Door said that the number of Angel Families in the Fourth Epoch exceeded the five. There were the Zaratul and Zoroast family, which had always been loyal to the Solomon Empire; the Augustus, Sauron, Einhorn, Castiya families of the Trunsoest Dynasty; and the furtive Andariel and Beria families; as well as the Demoness family which stemmed from a true goddess which was one step up from the Angel Families.

“So the last winner of the Fourth Epoch was the Trunsoest Dynasty, but where did their royal family go? The four Angel Families—Augustus, Sauron, and the others—divided up the Northern Continent.

“Just as Mr. Door said the previous time, the strongest powerhouses in the Fourth Epoch far exceeds my imagination. However, most of them have been buried in the ashes of history. Even the Sauron family has waned, destroyed by me. In another one to two millennia, perhaps the Augustus family might no longer exist. Only the true gods appear capable of forever illuminating the real world.

“Although some deities perished in the Fourth Epoch, they should only be few in number. This makes me think of something, something that was previously written in a web novel which I memorized. It can be used here with some changes:

“Ashes await those who fail to become true gods!

“After the communication period ended, Mr. Door disconnected. He’s like a prisoner who’s released on parole for a fixed period of time. And he does know a lot. When he mentioned the Zaratul family, there was faint contempt in his tone.

“Perhaps I need to maintain my relationship with Mr. Door. Apart from the Church of the God of Steam, Zaratul, and that secret and ancient organization, I should leave another outlet. “Unlike the saying, a wily hare has far more than three holes!”

When Emperor Roselle was struggling in the end, he was only thinking about the organization that’s suspected to be the Twilight Hermit Order. He didn’t mention Mr. Door at all. Something apparently happened in between... So the ancestor of the Loen royal family, the Augustus family was actually so rich and powerful to be an Angel Family. However, why did the royal family of the Trunsoest Dynasty, to which they were loyal to, “disappear” just like that... Klein suddenly thought of a few things, and his desire to clear away the fog that shrouded the history of the Fourth Epoch and see its true appearance grew.

This was also the greatest hobby of his body’s original owner.

Perhaps, that underground relic with two side-by-side seats and a terrifying evil spirit will help me answer a lot of questions... Klein lowered his gaze and flipped to the third page.

"2nd June, Bernadette massaged my back!

"It's good to have a daughter. She knows to care for her old father, and although I can see what she wants at a glance, at least she's willing to put on an act. Besides, she did a good job.

"I asked her which Beyonder pathway she wanted. She said she was undecided, but she liked the maxim of 'do as you wish, but do no harm.'

"3rd June. I saw Floren again. He's very different from before, as though he's a different person. No, he still had his original memories and some of his distinctive characteristics, which is enough to prove that he's him.

"What exactly happened to him to experience such a huge change?

"Perhaps a metaphor could be used to describe it more precisely. Some monsters are physical sutures, while he is a monster of mental sutures."

"5th June. I obtained an ancient book. It actually mentions the Primordial Demoness's name, not one of an honorific name!

"'Her' name is Cheek, but that's a man's name.

"Is this ancient book fake?"

Cheek? Was the Primordial Demoness also a man in the past? Klein almost raised his hand to his chin.

He had once guessed that it was because of the existence of the evil goddess, the Primordial Demoness, that led to the Assassin pathway having members of the opposite sex turn into a female after Sequence 7. Who knew that Roselle's diary would indicate that the Primordial Demoness might've been a male in the beginning as well?

This depicted two problems. First, the Primordial Demoness wasn't a naturally born deity, and they had only relied on potions to reach Sequence 0. Second, the purely feminine changes in this pathway were inherent in its Beyonder characteristics.

Roselle had once speculated about the truth behind the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation. He suspected that all Beyonder characteristics originated from the original Creator, so there's no increase, and that the total amount is conserved... Assuming that this is true, does this mean that the Creator who created everything is all-inclusive, masculinity, femininity, and gender-neutral all in one... And the Demoness pathway is a representation of pure femininity? Of course, that ancient book might actually be fake... There's a lot of information in Roselle's diary entries today... With thoughts flashing through his mind, Klein let the diary disappear in his hands.

"You can begin," he smiled and said to Justice, The Sun, and the others.

Alger looked towards The World immediately.

"Your Werewolf characteristic has been sold. An Artisan paid 1200 pounds for it. According to our agreement, I will receive 200 pounds.

"Also, I found clues to the hair of a Deep-sea Naga. 100 pounds a strand, and you want five of them in total. If you're fine with this deal, then I will complete it as soon as possible."

Klein had promised a higher share of the Werewolf's Beyonder characteristic because he knew that The Hanged Man had spent more effort and taken on a risk that far exceeded what Vampire Emlyn White had spent.

At this point, he thought for a moment and controlled The World to reply.

"No problem. Give me the five strands of Deep-sea Naga hairs and 500 pounds in cash as soon as possible."

Now, only the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic remains, and the amount of money I have has increased to 1,235 pounds, which isn't enough. If I don't want to wait for the Machinery Hivemind's exploration of the Amon family's mausoleum. I'd have to wait to receive another 500 to 1,000 pounds before I can buy it immediately when I see it... Klein subconsciously wondered what other items or knowledge he could use to exchange for money.

Of course, this was on the premise that the target of these transactions was able to pay the remuneration, in cash.

Hearing this, Audrey raised her hand very slightly, and without hiding anything, she said, "I'd like to purchase three ingredients: a pair of eyes from a Mirror Dragon, 50 milliliters of its blood, as well as a fruit from the Tree of Elders."

Miss Justice has gotten the formula for the Psychiatrist potion... Klein made this judgment in an instant, and The Hanged Man came to a similar conclusion.

"... I will write to my teacher and ask him if he has one of these ingredients." Fors thought for a moment.

Derrick nodded and said, "I'll also take note. Corroded Mirror Dragons aren't rare, same for the Tree of Elders. Uh, in the City of Silver, there's also the Beyonder characteristic left behind by a Psyche Analyst; however, it's hard to make transactions for them, and it's easy to be suspected.

Psyche Analyst was the ancient name of Psychiatrist.

When their conversation reached Klein's ears, he immediately manipulated The World and made the dummy hoarsely and gloomily say, "I'll ask around in my circle. Oh right, continue helping me find the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic."

“Alright.” Audrey confidently turned her head to face the person opposite her. “Mr. Hanged Man, I’ll also look out for the Windblessed potion formula you need.”

She had already joined the Psychology Alchemists and had a secret organization backing her. With them, many ingredients were no longer in short supply. She could obtain them as long as she paid the necessary price.

Fors repeated, “I’ll write to my teacher and ask.”

Upon seeing this development, Klein felt rather gratified. After a long period of hard work, the Tarot Club had finally developed two major channels, the Psychology Alchemists and the Abraham family. Many things would become simple.

The World chuckled and said, “Your answers fill me with hope, but you must also take care to protect yourselves, and proceed in a way that would avoid arousing suspicion as much as possible.” “Mr. World, you rarely talk so much.” Audrey smiled in reply.

...I got a little too pleased and momentarily forgot The World’s original character profile... Klein immediately remedied the situation and made The World chuckle and say,

“All of you have become sufficiently valuable. I hope that this kind of transaction can last for a very, very long time. That’s why I’m reminding you.”

“Thank you,” Audrey gracefully expressed her gratitude.

At that moment, Derrick hesitated and said, “I’ll give it a try as well. I’ve recently completed several patrol missions, but there’s nothing out of the ordinary.”

Very good... Klein said to himself, making The World shut his mouth.

After a brief moment of silence, Alger looked thoughtfully at Miss Justice.

“I would like to know the details of the assassination of Duke

Negan. What kind of reward do you need?”

Why ask me? As someone close to the Church of Storms, shouldn't you already know the full details of this case? Audrey was surprised for a moment, but then she understood the meaning of Mr. Hanged Man's words.

He wants to ask about the organization or force that instigated the Desire Apostle, but he doesn't think it's right to ask The Fool directly, thinking that it would be too sudden and invasive. So he took a roundabout way by asking me to open up the topic, gently shifting the focus to the things he wants to know... He knows that I'm a noble lady and that I should pay attention to the assassination of Duke Negan. So he's not worried that I won't answer him... Mr. Hanged Man is really experienced... Audrey said, with the corners of her mouth curling up slightly, "No, there's no need for compensation. Isn't it the purpose of our Tarot Club to freely exchange common knowledge amongst each other regarding their respective regions?"

Only by doing so can our Tarot Club expand at a rapid pace! she thought to herself, quite possessively.

"Your words shame me." Alger was stunned for a moment before he pressed his hand to his chest and leaned forward a little.

"..."

Klein, who was shrouded in the thick gray fog, inwardly laughed dryly.

Audrey lightly pursed her lips, weighed her words, and said, "The Desire Apostle used a unique situation to complete the assassination of Duke Negan; by using his ability to trigger intense emotions and desires, and at the cost of serious injuries, he successfully broke out of the encirclement, entering the sewers.

"When the Nighthawks caught up to him, he was already dead. The Hero Bandit Black Emperor was present. This gentleman didn't do it to silence him, but to target the organization that entrusted the assassination contract to the Desire Apostle.

Which organization? Just as The Hanged Man was wondering to himself in puzzlement, The Fool, who was sitting at the end of the table, silently praised Miss Justice and looked at her. He then gave her

a reminder in passing, “In the outside world, do not mention the name of the organization or write it down.” “Why?” Audrey blurted out in astonishment.

Klein leaned back in his chair and replied in a gentle voice, “Any mention of it will be known.”

Any mention of it will be known... Audrey subconsciously looked at Mr. Fool, only to feel that he seemed to be emphasizing something with his eyes hidden in the fog.

Mr. Fool is implying that if it’s not in “His” kingdom or through talking to “Him,” mentioning or writing down the name of the Twilight Hermit Order would allow them to sense it via some means or item... That should be what he means... What an extremely secretive and high-level organization! To a certain extent, it’s even more terrifying than the Church of the seven deities... And Mr. Fool, our Tarot Club is looking for them... Audrey instantly felt like she understood a lot of things. She straightened her back and said, “As you command.”

Any mention of it will be known... A secret organization whose name can’t even be mentioned? A powerful organization that I don’t know of at all? Is this the faction behind the Desire Apostle? Mr. Fool had sent his Blessed to search for them? This high-level situation in the world really is more complicated than I thought. There are even more secrets that I have no way of knowing... Alger slightly nodded his head, feeling both shocked and agitated at the same time.

At this moment, he had the urge to pay Mr. Fool for the name of the organization.

However, after thinking about it carefully, he felt that there was no need for that. Although understanding the situation involving the higher-level entities would help him perfect his plans for the future and play an important role in certain situations, he, who was currently at the bottom of the Mid-Sequence levels, had no way of making contact with matters related to the mysterious organization. What he needed the most right now was the formula and ingredients for Wind-blessed, so he had to save up enough wealth for them.

After succeeding my advancement, I could seek an opportunity to consult Mr. Fool... Alger made a note of this.

Fors was confused by what she heard. Things like the Desire Apostle and the organization in which "any mention of it will be known" were completely different from what she had read in the newspapers.

There are indeed many secrets behind the assassination of a duke... It's a pity that the organization's name cannot be written down. Otherwise, I can use it as the villain of a future novel; it will definitely be a classic... I still owe ten diary pages and haven't bought the Spirit Eater's stomach pouch. There's no need to spend the money in order to understand such high-end matters for the time being... Well, the secrecy and knowledge circulating in the Tarot Club are ten times greater than Mr. A's gathering, or more! Fors restrained her curiosity as a writer.

As for Derrick, he didn't know who Duke Negan was, so he didn't care who was behind the assassination.

He sat silently and was reserved, as though he were in class.

When the matter regarding the Twilight Hermit Order was over, Fors looked around and probingly asked, "Lady and gentlemen, do you have a way to solve the problem of accumulating too many Beyonder characteristics of the same level?"

Alger looked at Fors and returned with a question.

"You were forced to drink a second Apprentice potion?"

Why did you figure it out so easily... It's as though you were there to see it... Fors uncomfortably cleared her throat and said, "Yes, let's just pretend that's what happened...

"What solutions do you have? What do you need me to exchange

for it?"

Alger glanced at Mr. Fool, but seeing that he had nothing to say, he replied in a calm and low voice, "You don't need payment, because it will certainly not be able to satisfy your needs."

Without waiting for Miss Magician and Miss Justice to ask, he casually explained, "High-Sequence Beyonders can independently decide whether or not to pass on their Beyonder characteristics to their descendants, and how much they will inherit as a result. Sequence 6 and Sequence 5 will naturally pass a part of it in an uncontrollable manner. Although the quantity isn't a lot each time and wouldn't affect the Beyonder's strength, their Sequence will regress if they have enough children."

"Such a child is born with high spiritual perception and a certain level of incomplete Beyonder powers?" Audrey suddenly came to a realization, understanding the origins of some special people.

The Hanged Man nodded.

"Yes, they're equivalent to half a Sequence 9, with a certain amount of characteristics. If they want to become a Beyonder, they can only choose the corresponding path. Of course, such people might not be a result of inheritance. It might be the result of them gaining the blessings of a deity or the corruption of an evil spirit. There are many factors that can cause the same degree of influence. Also, when High-Sequence Beyonders have children, they might give birth to someone who's already at Sequence 5. This is one of the rare instances when one can advance without losing control.

So that's how it is... Audrey sighed with satisfaction.

To her, knowing more mysteries was more enjoyable than getting a nice dress or jewelry.

Fors also came to a realization as she pressed, "Then what about Beyonders at Sequence 7, 8, and 9?"

"Theoretically speaking, their Beyonder characteristics will not be passed down to their descendants, but that is not absolute. If there's an excessive amount of Beyonder characteristics, there's a chance for them to be passed down as well. That is to say, if you're pregnant with a child, there's a way to effectively reduce the remnant potion in your body. No, one might not succeed, but three or four will stand a higher chance." *Three or four?* Fors stared agape.

Klein, who had learned all of this general knowledge from Roselle's diary, couldn't help but think of a joke.

Miss Magician, in the future, you can say to your child that "you were a free gift [1] *from drinking a potion!"*

Although it seems that, according to Mr. Hanged Man, the burden can be reduced the moment a child is conceived, having a child would still require almost forty weeks of trouble. No, more than that, it's impossible to leave the child after it's born, right... After grasping the acting method, even if the process subsequently becomes more difficult, two months will definitely be enough time to digest it. It might not even take that long; after all, it's just a starting Sequence... Fors forced a smile and said, "I understand, the best way is still to rely on acting to digest it."

Alger gave an affirmative answer. "That's the case for Sequence 7 and below."

After that, digestion would easily take a year or so, two to three years, and then five to six years. When that happens, giving birth to a child would be a simpler plan... he added inwardly.

There were a few seconds of silence as the two women digested the knowledge they had just gained.

This was the first time they had known that having a child had such uses.

For Derrick, this was common knowledge. He adjusted his posture and said, “I’ve been assigned another exploration mission.”

“Where to?” Alger tilted his head and asked.

“It’s still the half-destroyed temple of the Fallen Creator,” Derrick answered without sounding too grave.

It sounds like there’s a certain guaranteed level of safety... Audrey didn’t interrupt.

The Hanged Man pondered for two seconds before asking, “Is the Shepherd Elder still in prison?”

“Yes. This exploration will be led by the Chief.” The Sun didn’t hide the facts.

“This way, the danger level will be much lower than last time. You can give it a try.” Alger couldn’t help but look at Mr. Fool once more.

Unable to read any thoughts from the other party’s blurry eyes, he continued to speak to The Sun.

“This should be your last inspection before the surveillance is completely removed.

“Previously, the information you made known was that Amon is archenemies with the Fallen Creator. They wouldn’t mind exposing themselves to spoil the other’s plans. This time, by heading to the Fallen Creator’s temple for exploration, as long as you don’t reveal any abnormalities, the six-member council will basically determine that you’re no longer under Amon’s influence.”

Mr. Hanged Man sure is experienced. It’s as if he was planning the operation... Derrick kept it in mind before asking, “What else do I need to pay attention to?”

At the very end of the long bronze table, The Fool, who was quietly watching, opened his mouth.

“Flesh and blood, ravings.”

Klein had only said two words, leaving the Tarot Club members to comprehend them on their own.

This was the demeanor of a great figure.

The Hanged Man pondered for a few seconds, then he said to The Sun who had thanked The Fool, "In particular, don't look at what you shouldn't, don't listen to what you shouldn't, don't eat what you shouldn't, and don't touch what you shouldn't."

"What are those that shouldn't be seen or heard?" Derrick asked, puzzled.

The Hanged Man said with a deepened voice, "After entering the temple, everything is included."

"Then, how should I explore?" Derrick asked in surprise.

The Hanged Man chuckled.

"Aren't there other members? Isn't there a Chief?"

It really is Mr. Hanged Man's style... Audrey subconsciously wanted to cover her face with her hands, but the education and habits ingrained in her had told her that such actions weren't graceful, so she forcefully changed the way she moved, stroking her drooping hair and pushing it behind her ears.

"..." The Sun felt that such a method was quite unacceptable.

Upon noticing his reaction, Alger secretly cursed before saying, "What I mean is to listen to your Chief's instructions. Only do what he allows you to do. At any other times, do not take matters into your own hands."

"I understand. Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man." The Sun instantly relaxed.

Phew. Alger exhaled and turned to the woman opposite him.

"Miss Justice, I wish to know the political changes in Backlund after Duke Negan's passing."

Audrey recalled the information she had heard, both directly and indirectly in recent times.

“Duke Negan’s death has divided the House of Lords. Although his eldest son is about to inherit the nobility title and become a member of the House of Lords, his prestige isn’t enough to calm the dispute.

“Nearly ten members of the House of Lords have jointly proposed that the newly conferred nobility should also have a chance to obtain a fixed seat as a Member of Parliament.

“Simply put, let those who are conferred nobility through political donations, charity donations, and the purchase of land become members of the House of Lords.”

Hearing this, The Hanged Man Alger laughed.

“Aren’t nobles with a certain amount of history in their family line the ones who despise such people who rely on unorthodox means to be conferred a nobility title the most? Wasn’t the ultimate honor and their greatest pride the fact that a fixed seat in the House of Lords was hereditary?”

Ignoring the inadvertent mockery, Audrey calmly explained, “When you have tens of thousands of pounds, hundreds of thousands of pounds, or even more debts, you will also make the same choice.”

Owing money wasn’t a fatal threat to many nobles, but the debtor could apply to the court and use their lands as payment for the debts. Without the minimum amount of land needed for a noble title, their status as nobles would be on the verge of collapse.

“And then?” Alger didn’t continue to harp over the previous question.

Audrey gave a rough description. “This kind of dispute has put many bills on hold, including, but not limited to, the raising of worker salary, the improvement of working hours, and revising the Poor Law. It’s gratifying to see that the Civil Servant Unified Examination is still progressing steadily and hasn’t stopped, and the investigation into the air pollution in Backlund is also going in depth.”

“There will be no war for the time being....” The Hanged Man whispered, and he went on to talk to the other members.

Worried that staying too long in the bathroom would arouse suspicion, Klein announced the end of the Tarot Gathering after they were done.

...

After returning to her room, Audrey didn't rush to get up. She first quietly sorted out the things she needed to do after this.

Looking at the mirror in front of her, she played with the accessories on her earlobes. With a slight smile, she silently muttered to herself, *There will be a psychology lesson tomorrow afternoon. I can tell Miss Escalante that I've met someone in a Beyonder circle who's looking to buy the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and has promised an abnormally generous price for it. I wonder if the Psychology Alchemists will be interested in it or not...*

Also, I mustn't forget Roselle's diary and the Wind-blessed formula...

Yes, I have to find the Psychiatrist ingredients as quickly as possible. Audrey, you can't be lazy! Susie is already a Sequence 8, so you can't let her overtake you!

...

After pacing back and forth in the room, Fors finally made up her mind and pulled out her chair.

She grabbed a piece of paper and a pen and, after mulling over it for nearly a minute, began to write to Dorian Gray.

She described how she learned of someone who requested the characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow and the Windblessed potion formula, as well as her curiosity over the Roselle notebook.

...

The capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, the City of Generosity.

Alger Wilson walked out of the hotel and headed for a secret underground market.

His target was the hair of a Deep-sea Naga.

He had no intention of missing a Human-skinned Shadow if someone had it.

...

I'm short on money... Klein sat in the living room and sighed again.

He still needed quite a bit of cash to ensure that he could purchase the items directly when he received clues regarding the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristics.

Klein thought for a long time, wondering if he should find other channels to sell the Beyonder characteristic left by the Interrogator and stop waiting for Miss Xio to save up her money.

After an unknown period of time, the sound of the doorbell rang, breaking the afternoon silence.

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1. This is a meme in China. The gift can be quite a wide range of things, one of them being a gift from topping up a telephone SIM card.

The visitor was a man in a dark green postman uniform. He smiled at Klein in a fawning manner.

"Are you Mr. Sherlock Moriarty?" he asked.

"Yes." Klein could vaguely guess the purpose of the other person's visit.

The visitor raised his right hand and handed over a palm-sized item that was wrapped in layers of black gauze.

"Please sign and accept your package." Klein deliberately revealed his doubts.

"Shouldn't you give me a slip and let me go to the corresponding post office for collection?"

The Loen Kingdom's postal system was a perfect replica of the Intis system, and even the flaws were copied quite significantly. Anything that couldn't be stuffed directly into the mailbox, no matter what it was, would only be given a "collection slip" by the postman, making the recipient go through the hassle of collecting it himself.

"...Haha, because it's rather precious, so I have to personally deliver it to you," the postman said after a momentary shock.

It seems you're not professional enough to be a real postman... Without further questions, Klein accepted the package, pen, and slip before signing them.

He closed the door and returned to the living room. He didn't rush to open the package, but he took out a gold coin and threw it into the air.

Pa!

Klein caught the gold coin and looked down to see if it was heads or tails.

A number faced up, indicating a negative response. *There's no latent danger...* Klein nodded slightly and put away the gold coin. He touched the paper figurine in his pocket and carefully opened the package.

After one layer after another of black gauze was removed, the objects inside clearly presented themselves to him. They were a pale gold-colored, elegantly patterned pocket watch; a handkerchief stained with dark red blood; seven or eight brown short curly hair tied together; and a stack of notes.

Talim's belongings, his hair, his blood, and his daily records, are all present... Prince Edessak sure is a very efficient man. It's not even nighttime... Klein looked at the items on the coffee table and suddenly felt that there were many people staring at him at that very moment.

An ancient Angel Family with a heritage of more than two thousand years would definitely have an unimaginable background. Being involved with the royal family's internal strife makes it possible for me to be pulverized at any moment and anywhere... Maybe I'm already being monitored now... I have to appear mediocre and useless enough, to ensure my safety... Klein had already decided what to do, so he took his time checking the pocket watch, handkerchief, and hair.

During this process, his spiritual intuition didn't give him any warnings, nor did it prevent him from attempting divination.

After having a better grasp on the situation, Klein took out the letter, picked up a pen, and wrote his divination sentence:

"The true cause of Talim Dumont's death."

He acted big-hearted and poised, as though he didn't feel that he was being monitored at that very moment.

Picking up the curly hair and handkerchief, Klein chanted the divination sentence while leaning back against the back of the sofa. His eyes turned deep as he entered Cogitation.

After repeating it seven times, he came to the dream world and saw the familiar lobby of the Quelaag Club.

And then he saw Talim Dumon clutch at his heart, his face contorted once again.

"This revelation shows that Talim did die of a sudden heart disease..." Klein opened his eyes and muttered softly to himself.

He frowned, wearing a puzzled, confused, and thoughtful expression.

He tried several different divination statements and received the same result.

He got up and paced back and forth several times.

He punched himself in the head, as though he was angry that he wasn't good enough to help his friend or find out who the culprit was.

In the end, he dejectedly sat down and didn't move for a long time. In the dark room, he was like the silhouette of a stone statue.

That should be enough. I can't go overboard... If there's no one monitoring me, then I would've been fighting with the air just now... Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating manner, got up, and walked to the kitchen.

After dinner, he seemed to perk up again before he read the stack of notes carefully, including what Talim had done and who he had met on the day and the days prior to his death.

Home, Red Rose Manor, Quelaag Club, Viscount Conrad's mansion... There's nothing out of the ordinary about it... Klein picked up a sharpened pencil and drew circles, marking out the places he would visit and the targets he would ask about in the next few days.

After doing all of this, he let out a long sigh. Without confidence, he packed up his things, washed up, and went to bed.

In the middle of the night, when the red moon was hidden by layers of clouds, Klein suddenly opened his eyes and woke up.

He got out of bed, opened the door slowly, and went into the bathroom next door, hiding himself with a Paper Figurine Substitute in the process.

Walking four steps counterclockwise, he arrived above the gray fog and sat down at the seat which belonged to The Fool.

His eyes had become clear, no longer dispirited, dejected, and pessimistic.

Soon after, Klein took the blood-stained handkerchief from a hidden pocket in his pajamas made out of old clothes.

When he was packing his things, he had used his Beyonder powers as a Magician to hide the handkerchief on his body.

After taking a deep breath, Klein conjured a pen and paper, and he wrote down the divination sentence that was no different from the beginning:

"The true cause of Talim Dumont's death."

After he repeated it seven times with his body and mind in peace and quiet, he leaned back in his chair with the paper and handkerchief in his hand and fell asleep in the silent and empty old palace.

In a gray, separated, and illusory world, Klein saw a completely different scene from before.

Presented before his eyes was a palm-sized wooden puppet, carved with eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

There were a few drops of dark red blood on the puppet's body, giving it a demonic appearance.

A palm stretched out. The skin was white and exquisite, smooth, and beautiful, with five slender and delicate fingers that accentuated the hand's flesh and bones.

The most eye-catching thing was a unique ring with an inlaid sapphire on the hand's pinky finger.

Pa!

The hand's index finger was wreathed in black flames as it pointed at the heart of the wooden puppet.

Without a sound, the scene shattered and Klein woke up from his dream.

His initial judgment wasn't wrong. Talim had died under a curse!

But there was a problem. He had already seen the scene of the curse happening, so why wasn't the scene displayed in its entirety?

The mysterious space above the gray fog is able to get rid of all interference... Klein was puzzled for a moment.

Normally speaking, receiving a revelation that too abstract and easy to misread was a problem with his limited divination abilities. It meant that the difficulty of the matter he was divining was too high and that it had nothing to do with the gray fog. It was an understandable outcome, but he had clearly seen the scene of the murderous curse, but he was limited to a small scope of the situation. It didn't provide a relatively effective revelation and was rather baffling.

Have I... encountered such a similar situation in the past? Klein dug through his past experiences.

Suddenly, he sat up straight, remembering a similar experience.

In Tingen, when he was divining the real reason behind the countless coincidences, something similar had happened!

He could clearly see the house with the red chimney, but he couldn't reach Ince Zangwill and Sealed Artifact 0-08!

Th-this is the power of someone or something that's at the level of a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact that's resisting the power of the gray fog? Klein's eyes abruptly narrowed.

No, not necessarily. There are still quite a few possibilities. I have to confirm it again! He put in a lot of effort in order to calm down.

As for the method used for confirming, it wasn't daunting for the experienced him. The method was simple—redoing the same divination again.

If the revelation doesn't change, it means that things aren't so terrible, and if divination is no longer successful, then something around the target or the target is resisting the gray fog to some extent, like 0-08!

Taking a deep breath, Klein calmly repeated the previous divination.

"The true cause of Talim Dumont's death."

...

He leaned back in his chair and chanted in a low voice, his eyes growing darker.

In the dream, all he could see was a hazy, shattered gray fog. There were no more wooden puppets or fingers.

Whoosh!

Klein straightened his back, his expression abnormally grave.

What did Talim get himself involved in? he frowned as he muttered to himself.

There's no question as to what I should do next. It's to be passive and perfunctory. I'll first lie to Prince Edessak before telling him that I'm incapable of figuring out the truth.

Phew, this world is really scary. Just the slightest bit of carelessness would cause me to come into contact with something extremely terrifying... Klein sighed. Without daring to stay any longer, he quickly returned to the bathroom in the real world.

...

Tuesday, 9 a.m. at the Crown Cemetery.

Klein stood at the edge of the crowd, wearing a black shirt, black vest, and a black tweed coat whilst he was carrying some fresh flowers he bought for 12 soli. He looked gravely at Talim Dumont's coffin being carried over, had his soul put to rest, and was buried bit by bit into the earth.

During this process, Talim's mother's eyes were red and swollen. She wanted to speak a few times, but she couldn't find her voice. His father's hair was gray, and his expression was haggard. He just stood there, trembling slightly.

When the scene reflected in his eyes, Klein tilted his head back and closed his eyes.

He waited until the mourners had left before he walked over, bent over, and placed the white flowers on top of the others.

I'm sorry... he silently said inwardly.

Standing up, he stepped aside and was about to leave when Klein noticed Reporter Mike and Surgeon Aaron, closing in.

“What a pity. I never thought that Talim would actually... actually... Sigh...” Mike’s expression was pained as he couldn’t finish his sentence.

Aaron, who was always cold, took off his glasses and wiped the corners of his eyes. He sighed and said, “He’s a warmhearted guy. He shouldn’t have ended up like this.”

“Yes, he could’ve gotten rid of his grandfather’s bad reputation,” Klein echoed.

Just then, he saw a female figure in a thick black dress with a veil covering her face walk up to Talim’s grave. She, too, was also carrying a bouquet of white flowers.

Klein looked away, not paying much attention, just keeping watch through the corner of his eye.

The woman bent down to release the flower, revealing her left palm, which was covered by a black gauze glove.

A blue gem faintly appeared on the pinky of her left palm.

Klein’s scalp tingled instantly.

His entire body felt numb.

A similar feeling that wasn't unfamiliar. The experienced Klein immediately used his Clown powers to control his facial expression and the slight trembling of his body.

Without rushing, he gently retracted his gaze, making the casual glance from before appear normal.

"Sigh, Talim was so young. He wasn't even married and has no children." Klein sighed as he went with the flow.

He had said this because it gave him a plausible explanation for his subtle reaction towards the woman who had offered the flowers—he had turned sad having seen a woman who had some connection with Talim, associated her to marriage and family, and then finally how his friend had passed away at an early age.

"Yeah, actually, at his age, he should've been married four or five years ago. Unfortunately, the matter with his grandfather left him with an extremely strong psychological trauma. He had always rejected marriage, and only recently did he improve." Reporter Mike sighed.

At this moment, the seemingly normal Klein seemed to have a cluster of thorns stabbing at his back, slowly piercing into his skin and flesh, causing him to feel extremely tense.

The girl in the black dress with the sapphire ring on her left hand pinky had straightened her body and calmly surveyed her surroundings. Afterward, she quietly left Talim's grave with two maids accompanying her. She silently walked further and further away from Talim's grave.

Phew... Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

The feeling of his back being stabbed quickly turned into a cold sweat.

Just who is she, and why did she come to the grave to offer flowers? Talim's lover? However, how could Talim, who had no wealth or status, have a relationship with a terrifying person who is involved with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or that of a demigod? This isn't a novel! Furthermore, she should be the one that used a curse to kill Talim...

This matter runs deep... Klein listened quietly as Mike and Aaron recounted Talim's past.

His thoughts quickly dispersed, feeling that the most puzzling thing about this matter was that Talim's death—an ordinary person who had no money, power, status, or strength—was actually involved with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a powerhouse of the same level. This was simply inconceivable!

But this isn't an isolated case. There's another similar case that has happened around me... Klein suddenly thought of something and looked at the surgeon, Aaron.

This ordinary person's home might very well be hiding a Sequence 1 Snake of Mercury!

Following this train of thought, Klein recalled the nearly five months that he had spent here since he transmigrated. He was stunned to discover that he had unconsciously become involved with many demigods and terrifying Sealed Artifacts.

The woman who had killed Talim; the Snake of Mercury, Will Auceptin; the Blasphemer Amon; the mysterious woman at the Royal Museum; a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Rose School of Thought; 0-08; 1-42; Ince Zangwill; the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem; the Antigonus family's notebook; Mr. Azik Eggers, who's suspected to be a descendant of Death; Mr. Door; the Twilight Hermit Order... Each name flashed through Klein's mind, and every single one of them made him feel like drawing in a cold breath.

He calmed his heart and carefully thought, *These don't include the True Creator and the Eternal Blazing Sun, who are ranked high above these... Strictly speaking, I can be considered to be among their ranks. After all, I came from a dark divination, and I'm a strange alternate world soul who controls the strange gray fog... Could this be another "crest of the times" after Roselle? So all the demigods and terrifying Sealed Artifacts are making an appearance in real life...*

As these thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, the griefstricken Reporter Mike and Surgeon Aaron excused themselves. He then left the cemetery at a leisurely pace.

Just as he was looking around for a rental carriage, a familiar carriage drove out of a secluded spot and stopped in front of him.

Although the coat of arms on the black carriage was skillfully concealed, Klein was still able to recognize it as Prince Edessak's carriage.

Without a sound, the door of the carriage opened, and the old butler with his meticulously combed hair alighted. He politely made a gesture of invitation.

"His Highness is waiting for you."

"Alright." Klein didn't feel guilty at all as he entered the spacious and warm carriage.

Prince Edessak was dressed in a dark blue coat with a large collar and a golden ribbon across his chest, which made him look very abnormally noble.

He rubbed the diamond brooch, and his long and narrow eyes showed hints of a sigh.

"I'm restricted even when participating in the funeral of a friend. I couldn't appear in person and could only watch from afar, sending someone to offer flowers for me. This is the royal family's lack of freedom."

"If Talim's grandfather hadn't lost his aristocratic title, then you wouldn't have to avoid anything." Klein abided by Prince Edessak's gesture and sat across from him.

Edessak picked up a cup of blood-red wine and said, "Sigh, I had originally planned to find an opportunity to help Talim's father recover his aristocratic title, but unfortunately..."

Instead of going deep into the subject, he asked, "Sherlock, did you receive the package?"

"Yes," Klein answered any questions he was asked, never giving any additional descriptions.

Edessak nodded slightly.

“Any progress?”

“I made several divinations using Talim’s hair, blood, and belongings, but all of them led to the conclusion that he had died of a sudden heart disease.” Klein used his emotionless, smooth narration to imply that “my Sequence isn’t high enough,” “my standards are limited,” “although I’m good at divination, the other party is stronger,” and “I’m sure that I can’t figure out the truth.”

Edessak looked disappointed and sighed.

“How do you plan on continuing the investigation?”

“Starting with the people Talim came in contact with a few days before his death and the places he went,” Klein replied according to the plan.

Edessak looked at the old butler.

“There will definitely be no lack of threatening interrogations or bribery. Hmm... Pay Sherlock 100 pounds for his investigation fees.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” The old butler took out a stack of bills that he had prepared earlier.

A hundred pounds straight out? Once again, Klein felt Prince Edessak’s generosity.

“I’ll do my best.” He took the hundred pounds in cash and pocketed it without counting it in detail.

“I hope that we can put Talim to rest.” Prince Edessak clenched his right fist and tapped the left side of his chest.

He turned his head to look out the window at Crown Cemetery which wasn’t too far away.

His friendship for Talim still remains strong... Klein sighed before he was led out to a carriage by the old butler.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey looked at her psychology teacher, whose long hair reached her waist, and she pretended to carefully look from side to side.

She immediately lowered her voice and said, “Miss Escalante, I recently joined a new Beyonder gathering. There were high offers for a Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and the Wind-blessed potion formula. Uh, different people. These are likely Mid-Sequence items, right? It sounds quite interesting. Ah, right. Will the Psychology Alchemists be interested?”

Escalante was startled. She pondered for a few seconds and said, “I’ll ask when I return.”

“Alright,” Audrey responded briskly, as though she were simply intrigued by such Mid-Sequence transactions.

Escalante retracted her attention and said in a serious tone, “Miss Audrey, although you are already a Sequence 8 Beyonder, you have yet to receive formal education in mysticism. You still don’t understand enough about the techniques and applications of a Spectator and Telepathist, as well as the foundation theories. Starting today, I’ll guide you to become a true Beyonder.”

“That’s what I wish,” Audrey said sincerely.

The huge golden retriever, Susie, who was sitting by her feet, wagged its tail happily, as if happy for her mistress.

...

Having made up his mind not to work, Klein took the carriage back to 15 Minsk Street.

He opened the door and was just about to take off his hat when he froze.

His spiritual intuition told him that a stranger had entered the living room. Someone had entered his room!

This... He barely hid his tracks... Is it considered a warning? Having a warning is better than not having one... Klein stood in the hall for a long time in silence.

Immediately, he turned around and went to the Steam Cathedral in a rental carriage.

The cathedral towered over the chimneys and clock tower, the former representing the power of steam, while the latter represented the beauty of machinery through the hanging of its intricate clocks.

It was neither the weekend nor noon or the evening, so there were only a few devotees in the hall quietly praying.

Klein sat down in the aisle, leaned his cane, took off his hat, and pretended to pray for ten minutes in front of the Sacred Emblem.

Then, he picked up his things and walked along the aisle to the altar. He said to the bishop standing to the side, "I wish to make a confession."

"Good, God is watching you." The bishop, who had a kind face and hoary hair at his temples, walked to the confessional by his side.

Klein followed closely behind and closed the door.

He sat down on a chair and said to the bishop through the wooden board, "I confess that I didn't adhere to my principles when facing danger, and I chose to retreat."

"What were you thinking at the time?" the bishop gently asked.

Klein immediately described in detail about Talim's death; his suspicions; the reminder from the Machinery Hivemind; Prince Edessak's entrustment; and, after how he failed to obtain any answers from his divination, he expressed his heartfelt cowardice in the face of the royal family's strife.

The reason he didn't go straight to Carlson was that he was afraid that not only was he being watched, but Prince Edessak's men were also watching him from the shadows. Once he made his intentions clear, he couldn't be sure if he would encounter another calamity.

The Steam Cathedral was the headquarters of the Church of the God of Steam and Machinery, and it was one of the three Great Holy Temples. No one could spy on whatever happened inside.

What Klein intended to do was to use the Church of the God of Steam to convey his true thoughts and avoid getting caught up in a deeper conflict.

Simply put, it was to comply with what his heart wanted.

The bishop listened quietly and answered without changing his tone, “Your choice derives from human instinct; God will not blame you.

“Go back, God will protect you.”

That’s good... Klein understood the hint and quietly left the Steam Cathedral.

Standing on the street outside, looking at the misty sky, he sighed silently.

I need to advance as soon as possible.

Chapter 445: Live Broadcast

Lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the pitch-black city walls.

Carrying a leather bag on his back and the Axe of Hurricane in hand, Derrick Berg stood outside the doorway to a cave with nearly ten of his teammates.

Lifting his eyes up, he saw that, between the stone cracks of the city wall, the dry and hardened black soil was crusting, but a bunch of tenacious weeds had grown out; they were densely packed and resembled human hair.

At that moment, he hurriedly withdrew his gaze and looked towards the city gate when he heard light footsteps.

As the lightning and darkness alternated, a tall figure slowly walked over, carrying two straight swords which were crossed on his back.

Then, his pale, disheveled hair; his ancient eyes; his twisted, deep; old scars; and his perennially-unchanged brown coat and flaxen-colored shirt entered Derrick and the others' sight.

The approaching person was the Chief of the six-member council of the City of Silver, Colin Iliad, a powerful Demon Hunter.

After greeting him, Derrick subconsciously looked at the Chief's waist. There was a leather belt divided into many compartments, each with a different metal bottle inside.

This was a symbol of an experienced and powerful Demon Hunter.

Derrick had previously heard his parents mention that Demon Hunters were good at discovering the weaknesses for different monsters, identifying the uses of various materials, and were able to use their special Cogitation state against the former. With the latter, they could concoct corresponding magical medicine, holy ointments, essential oils, and special imprints. Then, through consumption, smearing, and using these items, they could achieve the effect of restraining the target.

In a sense, experienced, knowledgeable, well-prepared, and sharp Demon Hunters were the nemesis of the vast majority of monsters. The amount and variety of small metal bottles at their waist represented their "experience."

Of course, this was only a portion of the Demon Hunters' Beyonder powers. Just by relying on these, they couldn't be called demigods or Saints.

Collin looked around and confirmed that all the team members were present. He then said in a low voice, "Light up. Let's go."

Two team members immediately lit the candles in their lanterns, letting the faint yellow light shine through the extremely thin leather.

During "daytime," when the frequency of lightning was relatively high, there was no need to use candles in the City of Silver as there was "illumination" every two to three seconds. Furthermore, the monsters in the nearby area had been cleaned out again and again. However, once they left the City of Silver and entered the darkness, they had to maintain sufficient candlelight. Otherwise, once the lightning failed to illuminate the skies, causing a dark environment that exceeded five seconds, there was a high chance for the team to suffer from an assault by certain monsters.

Intense fighting wasn't the most frightening development. What Derrick remembered so vividly was a story his parents had told him.

Once, while they were exploring the depths of the darkness, because of a previous battle with a horde of rotting corpses, the candles couldn't be replaced in time. This led them to endure being engulfed in darkness for as long as eight seconds. When the lightning flashed again and the candlelight appeared, they were stunned to see that only five of their original eight teammates remained. The other three had vanished in silence, never to be seen again.

Taking a deep breath, Derrick gripped the Axe of Hurricane tightly and walked in the middle of the team, following the Chief in a predetermined direction.

A bolt of lightning flashed, causing the plains covered in tall black grass to appear like an eerie oil painting.

The exploratory team of 10 Beyonders walked along the path filled with craggy gravel, venturing deep into the black grass.

The lightning subsided, and the dense darkness instantly swept over them, almost completely engulfing them.

The yellow candlelight pierced through the leather and, weakly, swayed to and fro, guarding the surrounding area.

...

East Borough, in a greasy and cheap coffee shop.

In accordance with the previously agreed upon appointment, Klein found Old Kohler, who was applying butter to his toast.

He glanced at the crumpled cigarette on the table and smiled.

“Newly bought?”

“No, it’s from the past. I haven’t smoked since, but I would always carry it with me, occasionally taking it out to sniff at it. Heh heh, this will remind me of that vagrant life of mine. Back then, I really felt like I could die at any moment.” Old Kohler’s tone carried a hint of fear.

Klein took 20 soli in change, which he had changed earlier, and pushed it across the table while sitting down.

“I was very satisfied with the information from the last time.”

Without waiting for Old Kohler to give a modest reply, he turned his head and looked towards the counter.

“A loaf of oatmeal bread, two slices of toast, a block of butter, a serving of beef stew with potatoes, and a one-pence cup of tea.”

“Mr. Moriarty, didn’t you have dinner yesterday?” Old Kohler was stunned for a moment as he held the cash.

Klein shook his head and smiled.

“I’ll be very busy later and might not have time for lunch.”

He needed to pretend that he was active and serious; after all, he had received a hundred pounds from Prince Edessak.

Old Kohler didn't ask any more questions. He looked around cautiously while stuffing the notes into his pocket.

"There are some results from the matter you previously asked me to find out more about. Azik Eggers's bounty comes from a few gang leaders and some intelligence dealers. Well, I don't know who entrusted the task to them since it's difficult to make contact with them."

MI9... Klein nodded.

"That's enough. There's no need to delve deeper. It's too dangerous."

Old Kohler heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Two days ago, someone at a budget hotel on Golden Cloak Street saw someone who appeared to be Azik Eggers. It's said that the person was basically a carbon copy of the picture on the bounty notice."

"..."

Klein's heart palpitated as he smiled instead of showing surprise.

"And then? Could it be that the moment I prepared to try for this bounty, the matter is over?"

"And then? With that clue, quite a number of bounty hunters rushed over, but they didn't find anything. Well, they said that there were traces of a fight in the room." Old Kohler tried his best to recall the information he had gathered.

The intelligence would definitely be sent to MI9 first... Did Mr. Azik have a secret standoff with them? I wonder what the outcome was... Klein took a glance at the boss who was coming over with a plate. He pretended to mutter to himself and said to Old Kohler, "Take me to Golden Cloak Street later. Maybe I can find some clues."

It was past breakfast time in East Borough, and there were very few customers in the cheap coffee shop.

"Alright." Old Kohler agreed without hesitation.

“A total of sixteen and a half pence.” The boss placed Klein’s breakfast on the table. There wasn’t much beef with the potatoes, but the stew was very overcooked. It was obvious that it had been prepared beforehand. The thick aroma tantalized Old Kohler’s taste buds to the point that he involuntarily gulped a mouthful of saliva.

After paying the bill, Klein picked up a fork and spoon and said to Old Kohler, “Continue.”

“There aren’t many people looking for the believers of The Fool anymore, except for a few stubborn bounty hunters... Many unemployed textile women, including some male workers, left East Borough...” Old Kohler went down a list of matters.

“What?” Klein swallowed the beef and looked up. “Left East Borough?”

“They must’ve found some other job. As for where they went, I couldn’t find out,” Old Kohler answered truthfully.

“Their families aren’t aware?” Klein pressed.

“Some left with their unemployed family members, while others had come alone from outside the city to search for work.” Old Kohler had already done some investigations.

Judging from the target’s choice, there’s something wrong... Klein made a mental note of it and continued to eat while he listened to Old Kohler talk about matters that had happened in East Borough recently.

After making an appointment for the next meeting, he put down the cutlery, wiped his mouth, picked up his hat, and said, “Let’s head for Golden Cloak Street.”

...

In the only budget hotel on Golden Cloak Street.

After the boss accepted a two pence tip, he led Klein and Old Kohler to the room which was suspected to be where Azik Eggers used to live.

“There have been many bounty hunters visiting over this period of time. Hehe, It made me earn quite a bit, so I have maintained its

original state." The hotel owner opened the door with his key and pointed inside.

At first glance, Klein saw overturned chairs and rags scattered everywhere. There were no other signs of a fight.

With his considerable spiritual perception, Klein cast his gaze under the bed.

After staring for two seconds, he walked over and bent down to pat the bed.

Dust flew into the air with a poof as a gray rat jumped out from under the bed.

It looked normal, without any problems, but in Klein's Spirit Vision, its aura only had the colors: black and green.

The rat turned a corner and climbed up a wall, exposing its belly to Klein's eyes.

In that soft spot, its flesh was green with flowing pus. One could see that his internal organs had similarly rotted away.

Klein thoughtfully looked back at Old Kohler, who wasn't paying attention to the rat.

"Has the bounty for Azik Eggers been withdrawn?" "No."
Old Kohler shook his head in confirmation.

Klein examined it again, he then stepped out and said, "Let's go, there's no valuable clues."

...

15 Minsk Street.

Klein, who had been "busy" all day, lay down on his bed and entered the dream world.

Scenes that were continuous at times, and at other times fragmented, swept past and all of a sudden, Klein woke up. He knew that he was dreaming.

A power has invaded my dreams... Klein maintained his previous dazed state, casually sizing up his surroundings.

He found himself in a suburb of fertile fields.

A river flowed over from the distance and made a turn around the cliff in front of him.

One side of the cliff was bare, revealing a pure white rock. Looking from afar, it seemed to have a kind of holy beauty.

Nearly ten men and women wearing black coats or dark jackets surrounded a hidden underground entrance to the bay, among them was Klein's acquaintance, Ikanser Bernard.

White Cliff Town... Stratford River Creek. Machinery Hivemind... Are they exploring the Amon family tomb? But why would there be scenes of it in my dreams? Klein was puzzled.

At that moment, he saw the water on the surface of the river undulate, rapidly forming a line of white words: "Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to report to you on the exploration's situation."

"..."

Klein's mouth turned agape, momentarily losing the ability to speak. Then, a voice echoed in his head: *Tell me, why would a perfectly good mirror be a snitch?*

In an instant, Klein switched to his unfathomable state as "The Fool who overlooked everything." He nodded and said, "Not bad."

Ahead of him, the river surged, and the white words squirmed and changed before taking shape again.

"What follows is the exploration process your loyal servant, Arrodes, has recorded. You can choose to speed up or skip certain scenes at any time."

This sentence froze for two seconds, and then the scene abruptly zoomed in. Klein instantly appeared beside Ikanser Bernard, but no one noticed him.

He looked around and felt that he was surrounded by living people with lifelike scenes. Nothing about his surroundings looked unreal, making him feel as if though he was there in person.

I can even speed up or skip certain scenes... The original form of this mirror, Arrodes, is a virtual reality family cinema... Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

He took another look at the Machinery Hivemind members and saw that it was led by an old man in white priest robes and a cleric cap. His face was unusually kind, and his expression was calm and gentle.

"Your Grace, everyone is ready," Ikanser approached the elder and said with a bow.

Archbishop... This is the archbishop of the Church of Steam and Machinery's Backlund diocese, the demigod, Horamick Haydn? The Machinery Hivemind really is cautious, and not careless...

Who knows, they might have even brought along a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact and performed a divination in advance. After all, they're in control of the Mystery Pryer pathway. Luckily, I can basically confirm that the fog's anti-divination or divination interference abilities are similar to the Cards of Blasphemy, allowing the result to be as ordinary as possible and the least bit suspicious; otherwise, certain matters might be exposed...

However, there's a certain probability that the meeting between Miss Sharron and I will appear, because, to me, that isn't something harmful. It depends on whether a Wraith's instinct to interfere with divination will affect the Machinery Hivemind's attempt. Wait, the Machinery Hivemind is highly likely to have relied on Arrodes, and based on its performance from just now and previously, it isn't impossible for him to curry favor with me by adding some mosaics... Klein thought in enlightenment.

At this point, Horamick Haydn drew a triangular Sacred Emblem on his chest.

"Begin the operation. God will protect us."

Nearly ten Beyonders headed down as Klein followed closely behind. He didn't "fast-forward" at all.

He had always been curious about the combat styles of Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders of the Machinery Hivemind, and he wanted to take this opportunity to experience it.

In addition, he was also greatly concerned about how a demigod really did in combat, as well as the secrets hidden in the Amon family tomb.

After being ransacked by time, in a period spanning one or two thousand years, the black marble staircase still retained its hardness without any signs of corrosion. The Machinery Hivemind members followed it all the way underground, where they saw the unique asymmetrical stone pillars and axe-andblade scuffing from the period of the Fourth Epoch.

The pillars stood on either side of the wide road, and in front of them was a large, heavy, dark gray stone double door.

The stone door had already cracked open, wide enough for two people to walk alongside each other. It was completely dark inside.

The Machinery Hivemind members were in no hurry to enter. They carefully searched the surrounding area with lanterns, but they found nothing of value.

“According to the plan, the first group will begin with a preliminary clean-up.” With the archbishop’s approval, Ikanser pushed down his hat, compressing his fluffy hair.

Clean-up? By the side, Klein ruminated over the word.

Amidst his puzzlement, the two strongest and burliest male Machinery Hivemind team members each laid down a long black box on their backs and opened them up.

Inside one long box was a sturdy, heavy, iron-black cannonshaped object. Its surface was engraved with dense and arcane patterns. In the other box was a complex and exquisite firearm with a chain of pale golden bullets inserted into it.

One of the two team members carried the cannon-shaped object and trudged to the open stone door.

Another Machinery Hivemind member picked up the peculiar gun, adjusted the bullet chain, and followed slightly behind.

After the two of them glanced at each other, the cannon-shaped object on the former’s shoulder rapidly lit up, outlining burning patterns and imprints before a loud salvo.

Boom!

A golden fireball, akin to a miniature sun, flew out from the “cannon barrel” and into the darkness.

Boom!

The ground trembled slightly, and intense light was emitted from the crack.

The body of the Machinery Hivemind member, who was holding onto the “cannon barrel,” clearly sank a little as his feet trembled.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

He repeatedly used the Beyonder weapon to launch one golden “cannonball” after another at different spots, causing the tomb to sway without a speck of dust falling.

After he came to a stop, the team member with the peculiar gun stepped forward and pulled the trigger.

Da! Da! Da! Da! Da!

The sound of machine-gun fire echoed as one pale golden bullet after another flew out, purifying the danger in the depths of the darkness.

...Isn't this the bombardment effect I've always wanted? Furthermore, they're using Beyonder expendables like purifying bullets and exorcism cannonballs... How extravagant! Is this the combat style of the Machinery Hivemind? Klein's stared with his eyes wide open and his mouth slightly agape.

After the series of savage bombardments, Ikanser raised his voice above the rumbling echoes and said, "Group two, do the follow-up clean-up."

There's more... Klein felt a little numb from what was happening.

The second group was also made up of two team members who used scrolls made of different kinds of leather.

They chanted simplified incantations, activated the scrolls, and tossed them inside.

The construct behind the stone door was suddenly shrouded by gentle and pure light. Droplets of golden holy rain pattered down, "cleansing" everything in the area.

Klein looked at this scene and suddenly found it somewhat ridiculous.

Wait, aren't you guys here to engage in archaeological studies? Aren't you professional "archaeologists?" Aren't you afraid that the tomb would collapse from using such clean-up methods?

While these thoughts flashed through his mind, the second team was done, and they shouted at Ikanser, "Deacon, as expected, the construct's structural integrity hasn't been destroyed." *They were clearly prepared.*

"Alright, continue forward." Ikanser gave the order.

Klein walked in the middle, through the stone door, and saw piles of dirt and debris on the ground. It was impossible to tell what kind of monsters had once been active here, and no one could guess the functions of the mechanisms that had been set up here.

After these "cleaning up" procedures, as long as one didn't dodge in advance, no Beyonder below that of High-Sequence Beyonders would be able to withstand it... Klein once again gained a deeper understanding of what the aesthetic of violence was like and what it meant to be simple, direct, and unreasonable.

In what followed, the previous scenes were repeated over and over again. The Machinery Hivemind team members smoothly approached, exploring one area after another, occasionally harvesting some Beyonder characteristics that were beginning to gather.

"There are no murals..." Seeing the main tomb chamber in sight, the archbishop of the Church of the God of Steam, Horamick Haydn stopped and muttered to himself in puzzlement.

Klein, who was considered half a historian, was equally puzzled.

Generally speaking, a noble family member's grave would more or less express their position and honor when they were alive.

And when a grave became a tomb or even a mausoleum, it was very common for a mural to be used to describe its master's life when it possessed enough space. In even older and more obscure eras, this wasn't rare, and it was even the most common method—the first thing humans learned was drawings, not writing.

Thus, it really was a little strange that there were no similar murals in the tomb of a Fourth Epoch noble family.

Upon hearing the archbishop's question, Ikanser immediately ordered the men to spread out in groups of two to search the vicinity for relevant traces of murals.

Watching from the sidelines, Klein couldn't help but want to "fast forward" a little to immediately see the outcome.

At that moment, he noticed that the two Machinery Hivemind members in the left corner had suddenly turned into three!

One of them looked identical to Ikanser Bernard, his fluffy hair propping his hat high.

This... Klein was first stunned before he made a guess.

The moment he had the thought, Ikanser walked over to the team member closest to him.

“Any discoveries?” He cleared his throat and lowered his voice.

The team member turned around warily, but immediately relaxed when he saw that it was Deacon Ikanser.

“No...” Before he could finish his sentence, the “Ikanser” in front of him suddenly turned into a piece of human skin and enveloped his body.

The pale human skin tightly wrapped around him, and his face began to form the outline of his facial features. During this process, there were no additional sounds, nor were there any abnormal movements that were triggered.

All of a sudden, the human skin began to emit rays of light, just like the rising of the sun!

The human skin immediately turned translucent and quickly soared into the air as if it was being burned.

A black whip immediately lashed out, striking its body, causing its movements to clearly slow down.

In such a battle, slowness was an “Original Sin.” One Beyonder weapon after another, burning scrolls, and pale golden bullets were released towards the human skin.

After a brilliant burst of light, countless ashes fell from the sky.

All of them coruscated faint light and slowly “struggled” to gather together.

It really is a Human-skinned Shadow... Klein turned his attention to the Machinery Hivemind members who had just been attacked.

The man pulled at his collar and pulled out a protective charm. There were many symbols and magic labels related to the sun on it.

“Thankfully, the archbishop got us to wear these things!” he held the lantern and sincerely praised.

It was only then that Klein realized that his brooch had the quality of the night, his ring had the intensity of the storm, and his belt exuded the sense of physical strength...

Although they aren’t all mystical items, most of them are in the category of charms and Beyonder weapons. Even if their effects will quickly decline, they’re still worth a lot! If you weren’t an Artisan or a rich Beyonder, there’s no way to gather that much... Is this the combat style of the Machinery Hivemind? Burning money... Klein felt a sudden setback, and it took him a long time to recover.

At that moment, the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic gathered and took form. It was like a huge diamond with countless sides reflecting light, and each side reflected a different face.

The faces were densely packed, layered, and left one dizzy.

I’m just short of it... Klein was overjoyed.

After the Machinery Hivemind handled the spoils, they continued to search for the murals, but they didn’t find any traces of them.

They had no choice but to gather again and head for the passageway that led to the main tomb.

Chapter 447: Portrait

After another series of bombardments, the passage into the main tomb was revealed to the members of the Machinery Hivemind.

The ground was littered with debris. The diamond-shaped Beyonder characteristic that reflected a human face lay silently at the bottom of the right wall, glowing with the light of two other objects.

The entire tunnel, including the two walls that lined the sides and the stone ceiling, was filled with potholes. However, one thing remained undamaged.

It was a frame that was hung up ahead about seven meters away. It was brown in color, and the wood grain was obvious, but only the side of the frame was revealed.

Without anyone mentioning anything, all the Beyonders present could tell that it was strange.

At this moment, the archbishop of the Church of Steam and Machinery, Horamick Haydn stepped forward and said in a gentle voice, “This is likely to be the Specter Portrait Frame that belongs to the Amon family according to the records. As long as one walks into its range and is illuminated by it, their Spirit Body will instantly be separated from their flesh and blood, turning into a portrait and be forever sealed inside. In this state, even if the portrait is replaced, there is no way of rescuing the person without the corresponding methods.

“If the duration of being sealed is too long, the body would already be dead; then, even if one grasps the correct method to remove the seal, the spirit will quickly dissipate.”

As he spoke, Horamick moved forward, step by step, closing in on the strange frame.

Klein was a bit worried, not daring to watch the demigod fight against the Sealed Artifact, but he quickly realized that he was just watching a scene provided by the magic mirror, Arrodes. What was there to be afraid of?

This is very normal—it's just like watching a horror movie or playing a dark game... Klein calmed himself as he quickened his pace and caught up with Horamick Haydn.

The demigod archbishop quickly reached the confines of where the mystical item that needed to be sealed was. He wore a white priest robe and a clerical cap, and his figure gradually appeared in the glass on the surface of the picture frame.

Glass... Glass in the Fourth Epoch? Seems to be the case. There has at least been glass in the Fifth Epoch's history all this time, and there has been no mention of who invented it... Klein waited with great interest for the "battle" between the demigod and the strange Sealed Artifact.

Horamick's upper body fully appeared within the Specter Portrait Frame, but his eyes didn't lose their luster!

He walked towards the frame, face to face.

The silhouette within the painting flickered, as though it was constantly shrinking, yet it was unable to succeed.

Horamick stopped, took out a large, almost opaque black cloth he had long prepared, and he covered the Specter Portrait Frame.

The frame trembled a few times, but in the end, it was completely covered by the black cloth and turned silent.

Horamick seemed to be unaffected as he effortlessly removed the Specter Portrait Frame and finished wrapping it with the black cloth before tying a knot on its back.

This... This doesn't make mystical sense... Didn't you say that your Spirit Body would be absorbed into the frame and be turned into a portrait? Why is the archbishop fine... Is this the uniqueness of a demigod, or is it because of another reason? Klein sized up Horamick Haydn, but he didn't notice anything out of the ordinary.

His eyes are filled with spirit, his expression genial, and he's rich in flesh and blood... It's a pity that I'm not there in person. Otherwise, I could activate my Spirit Vision and have a look... Klein retracted his gaze and waited for the Machinery Hivemind members, such as Ikanser, to come over.

Horamick handed the Specter Portrait Frame to a member of the team and walked towards the main tomb at the end of the passage.

There was a black stone door filled with scrapes carved by blades and axes. In the middle of the door was a grayish-white disc.

The surface of the disk was divided into twelve segments. There was a black needle, just like a clock from the outside world.

However, the segments weren't evenly distributed across the disc. They were of varying sizes and extremely incongruous. Furthermore, each grid had half of its surface covered in a shadow.

"The coat of arms of the Amon family." Archbishop Horamick made a brief introduction.

He didn't explain the symbolic meaning of the coat of arms, because presently only Deacon Ikanser Bernard was qualified to know.

Klein, on the other hand, relied on his own knowledge of mysticism to attempt to decipher it.

Disc, twelve segments, and a needle. Combined together, they clearly represent time. It matches the Worm of Time which Amon's avatar left behind after it was wiped out. What should be twelve equal segments on a disc, are unequal in size, and there's a shadow over a portion of it. Does this mean that the Amon family is the dark side of time? Then, where does their title as a Blasphemer family show itself?

While Klein was thinking, Archbishop Horamick pushed open the stone door without any protection.

The heavy stone door opened, revealing an extremely spacious tomb chamber.

In the center of the chamber was a dais with a deep-black coffin on top of it.

The surrounding walls were decorated with iron lampstands, each holding a burning white candle.

All the candles didn't flicker. It was so quiet that it seemed like a scene that was fixed in place, completely devoid of any signs of it suffering the effects of time that spanned one to two thousand years.

On the straight path from the stone door to the coffin, there were corpses lying on the ground. They were all wearing black tweed coats, half top hats, or even ordinary worker clothes with a cap on their heads. It was obvious that they had entered in recent years.

The Beyonders that previously recruited helpers? How did they get past the area at the front? The Human-skinned Shadow and the other monsters were clearly still alive... With a mind filled with questions, Klein looked at the corpses.

What he saw left him immediately shocked.

The corpses all had sparse white hair, dry and wrinkled skin, and obvious markings on their skin. They looked like eighty- or ninety-year-olds.

There were no obvious wounds on their bodies as though they had died of old age. Furthermore, it appeared as though they had died recently and hadn't even rotted yet.

It's very obvious that there wouldn't be this many aged Beyonders exploring the tomb. Even if the discoverers of the tomb were old, they would still try their best to choose the young and strong when recruiting helpers... There's something odd about it! Klein frowned and looked around again.

He quickly thought of the Worm of Time left behind by Amon's avatar, and the coat of arms of the Amon family that represented time on the stone door.

Making people age rapidly is one of the Amon family's Beyonder powers? The dark side of time... The loophole in time... Could it be that as others rapidly age, the members of the Amon family would regain their youth and extend their lives? Wait a minute, for these Beyonders to easily barge into this place like that, perhaps it was deliberate on the tomb master's part. He wanted to rob them of their time in order to maintain his own existence... Klein looked suspiciously at the black coffin on the platform.

At this moment, the demigod, Horamick Haydn, raised his left hand and pressed it down.

“You will stop here.”

“Yes, Your Grace,” Ikanser and company answered without any hesitation.

As members of an official organization, they had read up on a large number of past Beyonder events. They knew that under similar circumstances, they had to obey the will of a HighSequence Beyonder and absolutely couldn’t act rashly or else they would die without knowing how.

Horamick looked ahead, and his eyes fell on a picture frame that hung upside down at the bottom of the dais.

His expression didn’t change as he continued to walk forward at a leisurely pace.

Not making any preparations at all? The hallmark of demigods is to be “rash?” Klein was stunned.

He seemed to be able to imagine Horamick’s teeth dropping, his white hair wilting, and his skin shriveling as he rapidly aged.

One step, two steps, three steps... Horamick, who seemed fine, suddenly trembled, and a sharp and piercing grinding sound could be heard from his body.

His pace began to slow down, his movements became stiff, and his skin visibly dried up.

There’s something wrong with that... That isn’t the aging process of a normal human being... What was that grinding sound just now? Klein muttered inwardly.

Four steps, five steps, six steps. Ripping sounds came from Horamick’s body as something fell to the ground.

Klein subconsciously looked over and saw a gear.

A gear covered in rust!

Horamick continued on as items kept dropping from his body from time to time. There were rusty screws, melted wax, yellowed bones,

and loose springs... His figure became increasingly thin and unsteady, as if it could collapse at any time.

This is just like a robot... Well, in this era's terms, "like a living doll"... Klein was suddenly enlightened.

He remembered that before Old Neil died, he had said that the Church of Earth Mother's Sequence 4 was good at Alchemical Life, and that the Savant pathway's corresponding Sequence was barely able to do so too.

As for Horamick, he was a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Savant pathway!

The Horamick in front of me isn't the real him, it's just a refined doll. Just now, the reason why the Specter Portrait Frame was ineffective was that a doll doesn't have a Spirit Body! The real Horamick should still be far away... As expected of a demigod... Amidst Klein's enlightenment, the archbishop walked up to the dais, bent his knees and back, and turned the upside-down frame over.

Generally speaking, when exploring a tomb involving Beyonder elements, it was necessary to avoid flipping items over, but this time, Horamick had made the opposite choice.

Following the flipping of the portrait frame, a wind suddenly blew in the sealed tomb, dispersing the formless imprisonment and silence.

The candles on the iron-colored light fixtures rapidly ignited, becoming unusually bright. However, they soon reached the end of their lives and melted away.

The old corpses on the ground rapidly rotted and stank.

In just a few seconds, the tomb's main chamber had turned dark, leaving only the lanterns that the Machinery Hivemind members were holding onto to barely illuminate the area ahead.

Horamick picked up the picture frame from the floor and went up the stairs to the dais.

He came to the black coffin, stretched out his right palm, and forcefully pushed.

Creak. The heavy coffin lid opened up a crack with a creaking sound, as though it wasn't nailed shut at all.

Horamick looked down and said in the same unchanging voice, "There's no corpse."

As the scene drew nearer, Klein saw that the coffin's interior was empty except for a pale gold cushion embroidered with a worm with twelve rings.

At that moment, Horamick turned around and the picture frame in his hand was reflected in the eyes of Ikanser and the others.

With just a glance, Klein's gaze suddenly froze.

It was a portrait of a smiling young man.

He had black eyes and curly black hair.

He had a broad forehead and a thin face.

A crystal monocle hung over his eye.

He wore a black pointed hat.

Amon!

Amon... Klein said the word in his mind.

He had originally thought that the Blasphemer who appeared in the Forsaken Land of God' City of Silver was a descendant of an ancient family like Amon. Through inheriting the legacy of his ancestors, step by step, he stepped into the demigod ranks. To his surprise, it was very possible that that particular person could very well have lived for more than two thousand years and was a member of the Amon family when it was at the peak of its strength!

An old antique... Why would he, for no good reason, build a tomb for himself? Did he fake his death to get out of a situation, or is there another reason, such as leaving traces so as to have time fixed onto his body? He was able to live from the Fourth Epoch to the Fifth Epoch, all because he was siphoning the lives of others? I originally guessed that he's a Sequence 3 or Sequence 2. Based on what I've seen today, it's not impossible for him to be a Sequence 1. After all, long periods of time would eventually bring about an intrinsic improvement... Klein switched back and forth between puzzlement and speculation. His thoughts were like boiling water, gurgling non-stop.

The Horamick "doll" tugged at his throat and accidentally pulled off a piece of skin, revealing the complicated mechanical structure within.

His voice came out from that spot and brought with it the impression of leaking air.

"Search the corpses on the ground; don't come any closer."

"Yes, Your Grace!" Ikanser and company heaved a clear sigh of relief.

The corpses on the ground had long since produced their Beyonder characteristics. Some of them had even combined with certain parts of the body to form a terrifying mystical item.

In addition, the dead carried all sorts of items on them.

The Machinery Hivemind sure has reaped quite a harvest this time. Together with the Specter Portrait Frame and the Humanskinned Shadow characteristic, this completely makes up for the crazy

expenses of the "clean-up"... A huge investment for a high return... Klein's eyes lingered on the ground for quite a while.

He inhaled, tore his gaze away, and followed Horamick, who didn't carry a lantern, to the wall on the other side of the coffin.

At this moment, the magic mirror, Arrodes, brightened up the scene, allowing the things in front of him to be seen clearly.

Klein saw that the wall across him had become mottled due to the rapid "weathering" just now. Many of the murals had been destroyed and could no longer be restored to their original states.

The only one that was more complete and could barely be seen clearly was a colorful mural at the top of the wall, which took up a small half of the dome.

It described a towering mountain range, and on the highest mountain peak, there was a huge cross that was taller than the mountain.

The cross was covered in layers of radiance, making it seem unusually holy.

In front of it, a tall and domineering figure could be seen vaguely. The mountain range was like a pet that lay prostrate at its feet.

This figure was surrounded by two-winged, four-winged, and six-winged angels. They were holding bugles, playing harps, or playing flutes, looking pious and sprightly.

At the foot of the mountain range, two twelve-winged angels were humbly walking towards the mountaintop, each holding a baby in their arms.

The baby on the left had curly black hair, and the baby on the right had pale blond hair.

One of their eyes was black; the other golden.

Elsewhere in the mountain range, there was a vague depiction of a giant with chains at its legs and a dragon that had its legs bound and never be able to land.

Horamick first looked at the baby on the left, and his genial expression became increasingly serious.

He said a word in a very low voice, “Amon.”

Then, he turned to look at the baby on the right, and after a few seconds of silence, he said another name, “Adam...”

Amon, Adam... As Klein repeated the names, he felt that the fog that hung over the history of the Fourth Epoch and the Third Epoch was growing thicker.

He combined all the information he had learned and quickly made a guess.

On the mountaintop, the figure in front of the glowing cross is surrounded by angels, with giants and dragons submitting to it. It’s definitely a real god that’s at Sequence 0... Another being who likes to partially use the cross as a symbol is the True Creator... It’s said that Amon is the descendant of an ancient sun god, but the one at the top of the mountain doesn’t seem like a pure sun god...

Could it be that “He” is the “Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God” that the City of Silver believes in?

This is in accordance with the legends of the City of Silver. The awakening of the Creator who stripped the King of Giants and the Dragon of Imagination and other ancient gods of their authorities...

The so-called ancient sun god is actually the Lord that created everything as spoken about in the City of Silver? “He” may be in charge of the domains such as “sun” and “time.” In addition, the authorities of the Giant King, Aurmir, and the Dragon of Imagination, Ankewelt, has likely returned to “Him”...

Th-this can no longer be completely contained within Sequence

0...

So, the original Amon was the descendant of the City of Silver’s “Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God,” who inherited the Beyonder characteristics of the time domain? This seems

to slightly explain why he remained silent in the City of Silver's dungeon for decades.

Apart from him, there's also another descendant of the "Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God," named Adam...

What did Adam inherit in the beginning? Does he still have a descendant alive, and if so, where would he be...

What's the relationship between the True Creator and that person? Is it simply an imitation by using the Creator's title and the symbol of the cross? Or is there some deeper connection between the two?

Klein didn't let his doubts show too much. After all, the magic mirror, Arrodes, could be sizing him up.

Horamick stared at the mural for a while, then he suddenly took a few steps forward and pressed his extended palms against the wall.

Without a sound, the majestic mural disintegrated, turning into pieces of stone fragments that landed on the ground. Even the color quickly evaporated, disappearing without a trace.

The Church of the God of Steam and Machinery is consciously concealing the history of the Third and Fourth Epochs... Are the other Churches the same? Klein frowned and followed the Horamick "doll" to the other side.

After making a half-circle, they discovered another thing.

A stone door, which only had an outline, loomed in the corner.

At this moment, the Horamick "doll's" joints were constantly creaking, but this didn't stop him from quickly approaching the stone door and reaching out with his right hand to attempt to push.

Above the stone door, there was a sudden burst of aqueous light that condensed into a scene that looked so real that it seemed possible to directly touch it.

Dark blue waves were surging forward, and there was a dense black mist that looked like liquid.

A craggy mountain protruded from the mist, continuously flowing with viscous liquids.

Behind this mountain, the black mist seemed endless, with no end in sight.

There was also no limit to its depth. The deeper one looked, the more placid it felt. It was as if once something fell in, it would fall forever.

What is this place? Klein's expression didn't change as he muttered inwardly.

Horamick retracted his palms and watched as the scene gradually faded until it disappeared.

He leaned his head back and sighed to himself while feeling perplexed.

"The Abyss..."

Abyss? That's the source of all corruption. It's said that it's an abyss that can even corrupt a true god? Klein was amazed, but as a former Clown, he regulated his expression and limbs to appear unperturbed.

He immediately thought of something. Roselle, who was exploring the Fog Sea, had once deviated from his path, leaving behind a puzzling sentence: "I saw the abyss."

As Klein pondered about the layers of waves that were surging towards the black fog, he made a conjecture.

There's an entrance to the Abyss somewhere in the Fog Sea?

Immediately after, he looked towards the stone door. He suspected that Amon, who lurked around the City of Silver, had employed a certain ritual. After finishing the tomb, he didn't depart from it normally; instead, he used a special tunnel to head for the Abyss. Thus, in the eyes of most people, he was already dead.

As for whether the City of Silver or the Forsaken Land of God was located somewhere in the Abyss, Klein couldn't be sure. After all, the history of this tomb was at least 1500 years old, so Amon had plenty of time to use the Abyss to go somewhere else.

Would he still occasionally come back to siphon off time? If he finds out that someone has dug up his grave, the expression on his face would definitely be very marvelous... Klein rejoiced for a baffling reason.

At this moment, the Horamick "doll" held his left hand in his right palm and abruptly twisted it.

With a creaking sound, his left hand was bent at the wrist, but there were no bones that pierced out of his skin, spewing out flesh and blood.

There was a heavy, black metal tube inlaid in his left wrist!

His entire left arm was a small-caliber mystical cannon!

To hide a mole of advanced technology, he truly is worthy of being from the Machinery Hivemind. However, the requirements and costs for such a thing are too high. Clearly, it could only be provided to specific personnel and not for military troops... Klein felt that today was an eye-opener for him, an opportunity to see another development path in the mysterious world.

The only problem is that Beyonder characteristics are conserved, Artisans are limited, so many things cannot be mass-produced.

The Horamick "doll" put his left wrist against the stone door.

Inside his body, the sound of gears grinding against each other as they revolved emitted an intense spirituality radiance.

A ray of light that was as bright as day appeared and disappeared.

The stone door suddenly turned into pure powder, as if it had never existed.

H-he destroyed the door? If Blasphemer Amon encounters an emergency situation and attempts to return here, only to find the door gone, that would be fun... Klein almost laughed when he imagined that scene.

This was the end of the Amon family's tomb exploration. The scene surrounding Klein quickly shrank and became the background.

An illusory, ancient, and bizarre silver mirror appeared in midair. The black, eye-like gemstones on the mirror flickered.

White words were quickly outlined in the mirror:

"Your loyal servant, Arrodes, has finished reporting and is ready to serve you at any time again."

Klein was a bit wary and unaccustomed towards the fellow who appeared too enthusiastic. He nodded and said, "Well done, you may leave first."

"Yes, the mighty existence above the spirit world." As soon Arrodes produced that line of words, the scene around him shattered into pieces.

After confirming that its power had left his dream, Klein thoughtfully said to himself, *The mighty existence above the spirit world? It really has vaguely sensed the gray fog...*

Does this magic mirror with a wicked sense of humor really wish to rely on me, or does it have some other purpose?

I have to watch carefully; otherwise, with it at the Machinery Hivemind, I don't want to be repeatedly blasted with cannon fire...

Rounding up his thoughts, Klein began looking forward to the next day.

After the Machinery Hivemind tidied up their spoils, they were likely to get him to choose an item!

Chapter 449: Better Choice

In Empress Borough, inside the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

The cold air was kept out by the windows and walls. The building's interior was warm as though it were spring, and the fireplace was elegant.

Audrey Hall was having her measurements taken by the fashion designer, Mrs. Guinea, so that she could create a costume for Audrey for the new year banquet in consideration of her recent physical and emotional state.

At this moment, her personal maid, Annie, came close to her ear and whispered, "Lady Escalante is here."

Such a fast response? Audrey was delighted, but she didn't make an obvious show of it on her face. With a faint smile, she said, "Please get her to wait in my art studio. Hmm, for five minutes." "Art studio?" Annie asked in surprise.

"Yes, I'd like to ask her to admire my recently completed oil painting. She says that content that is painted in a relaxed state easily allows one to express their true thoughts and emotions," Audrey explained unhurriedly.

Annie suddenly felt enlightened.

"Yes, Miss."

Less than five minutes later, Audrey entered the studio and saw Escalante admiring the paintings on the walls.

"That's Mr. Cenci's Inner Heart's Night, a masterpiece that allows one to feel peace," she smiled and introduced the painting to Escalante.

"Cenci's Inner Heart's Night? One of the top ten works of last year's 'top hundred century-old paintings' that the Tussock Times voted for?" Escalante was obviously the kind of person who often read newspapers.

And as a Beyonder of the Spectator pathway, she had a good memory.

"Yes," Audrey replied simply, as though it was a trivial matter.

“I actually have the honor of seeing the real deal...” Escalante looked up at the painting again.

She swallowed back the words “this is worth at least a manor,” unwilling to appear too philistine.

Audrey didn’t continue introducing the other paintings. She found a reason to send Annie away and motioned to Susie to “stand guard” outside the door.

Susie read her hint without any hindrance, wagged her tail, and scampered out.

Escalante closed the door and went back to the easel’s side. Before Audrey could ask, she took the initiative and said, “We have both the Human-skinned Shadow’s characteristic and the Wind-blessed potion formula. However, there is no need for us to sell it unless the other party is able to provide an irresistible offer.”

The willingness to negotiate means there’s hope! Audrey’s green eyes darted slightly as she asked with a chuckle, “What do you wish to receive in exchange?”

Escalante stroked her hair and gave her pre-prepared answer.

“2,500 pounds for the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic, and 3,000 pounds for the Wind-blessed potion formula.”

Quite a huge premium... Although Audrey didn’t find them expensive, she lamented the fact that the Psychology Alchemists’ premium had exceeded 50%.

According to the description given by The Hanged Man, under normal circumstances, the formula for Sequence 6 would’ve cost less than 2,000 pounds, but the closer it was to a High Sequence, the fewer potion formulas there were to circulate, making it very difficult to buy them. There was no normal situation, and what was even more important was that even if one chanced upon a sale, it was very difficult to ascertain their authenticity.

At that moment, Escalante added, “If the other party can barter with mystical items, all that’s needed is for them to be of roughly the same value.”

That is to say, you want mystical items more and can accept a price reduction for them... The Psychology Alchemists is one of the youngest secret organizations. They clearly haven't accumulated enough in this area compared to the others... Audrey pursed her lips and said, "I'll inform them, but I can't guarantee that they'll accept it."

She wasn't the least bit worried that the Psychology Alchemist would notice that she hadn't been involved in any Beyonder gathering recently. After all, her schedule was rather tight— afternoon tea, music lessons, dinners, dances, equestrian training, language lessons, dancing lessons, and so on. There were too many opportunities for her to interact with different people. In that case, perhaps a particular dinner was a cover for Beyonder gatherings, or perhaps the music teacher was a senior Beyonder, and it was almost impossible for the Psychology Alchemists, who hid in the shadows, to investigate it when they couldn't act openly.

Having said this, Audrey curiously asked, "Ms. Escalante, I thought you wouldn't sell the Wind-blessed potion formula since it's already at Sequence 6."

"Heh heh, if there's a chance, it might be more useful to spread this information out," Escalante answered vaguely.

In her mind, although Miss Audrey was a new member who had a high level of importance attached to her by the organization, she was still a new member after all. There were many things she couldn't know about.

Why? Audrey suppressed her doubts and smiled sweetly. She asked innocently, "Ms. Escalante, if this deal succeeds, can you count it as my contribution?" Escalante broke into a laugh.

"Yes."

...

Klein "busied" all morning, until he returned to Minsk Street. He filled his stomach and prepared to rest; only then did he have the time and opportunity to listen to prayers above the gray fog.

Someone on Miss Justice's side has the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic? Seriously? Either it doesn't come, or it comes in pairs... As a secret organization, the Psychology Alchemists is quite qualified in the field of resources... Klein was suddenly left in the throes of happiness from having a choice.

Even if he counted the 500 pounds which The Hanged Man still hadn't paid him, he only had 1,335 pounds in cash. This didn't prevent him from seriously considering the request for a deal with the Psychology Alchemists.

After thinking for a dozen seconds or so, he passed Justice's words to The Hanged Man to see what choice the latter would make.

...

3,000 pounds? Alger Wilson, who was still in Rorsted Archipelago's capital, the City of Generosity, felt as if someone had struck him hard.

After he became captain of the Blue Avenger, he sometimes played the role of a pirate and sometimes a law enforcer, secretly exterminating several groups of pirates. But even so, the total value of his spoils of war didn't exceed 2,000 pounds, and a portion of it had to be distributed to the sailors under him. Of course, this didn't include the ships and cannons which were captured as they had to be handed over to the Church of Storms.

This made Alger often sigh that most pirates weren't rich, that they were used to squandering on having opulent lives—liquor, barbecue, whores, marijuana, and gambling had drained the pirates of their money.

Unless I meet a pirate crew with Beyonders, it would be very difficult to get rich so suddenly... Alger paced a few steps, then he made up his mind.

He took out a gold mask from his undergarment pocket.

The mask had rough facial features, and the way they were formed had the characteristics of a primitive human being from an ancient forest.

Alger sat down, humbly recited the honorific name of The Fool, and said, "...I'm willing to use this mystical item to barter for the Wind-blessed potion formula.

"As long as the user wears this mask, they will become extremely calm and emotionless. At the same time, they will also obtain an extremely strong regenerative ability, exaggerated speed, and outstanding strength, as well as grasp a certain amount of black magic and primitive curse techniques.

"Its weakness is that as the number of times it's used increases, the wearer will become more and more unlike a human being. They will turn colder and colder, eventually treating themselves as a god."

...

Sitting in his seat as The Fool, Klein looked at the 500-pound note in front of him, the 5 strands of dark-blue hair as thick as a tiny snake, and the simple golden mask. He tapped the edge of the long table with his finger, thinking carefully about what mystical items he could use for a trade.

The All-Black Eye? Certainly not. This is the main ingredient of a Sequence 5 Marionettist. It's just short of having Little Sun to obtain the method to remove the mental corruption.

Black Emperor card? This card which cannot see the light of day has a value countless times higher than that of a Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic...

Mr. Azik's copper whistle? At the moment, its only function is the summoning of a messenger, and it's an important tool for communication. I can't sell it...

The copper whistle of the Numinous Episcopate member who left behind white feathers? Similarly, it can only summon a messenger, but the target on the other side of the messenger seems to be very dangerous...

Sun Brooch? This is something I want to use for myself. It effectively makes up for my weaknesses.

Master Key? It involves Mr. Door and has too many hidden secrets. In addition, just from the value of its effects, it pales in comparison to the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic...

Biological Poison Bottle? This is very compatible with my Spirit Body state. If I use it well, I can even fight a group of Beyonders...

Demon hunting bullets, purifying bullets, exorcism bullets? These are not mystical items and are considered consumable Beyonder weapons. They are of very low value...

The Book of Secrets? This isn't a mystical item either. The Psychology Alchemists likely do not lack such knowledge...

At present, only the Beyonder characteristic of an Interrogator can be sold. However, the Psychology Alchemists wants mystical items. Furthermore, the trading venue is in Backlund, so it would easily expose information pertaining to Hero Bandit Black Emperor...

Klein took this opportunity to sort out what he had and finally came up with a perfect plan.

He first took the form of Mr. World, manipulating him to take up a praying posture, and then he responded with a hoarse voice, "...I accept the price of 2,500 pounds, but give me two days to raise the money."

Immediately following that, Klein threw the reply scenes of The Hanged Man and The World to the crimson star which symbolized Miss Justice.

...

After receiving affirmation from Miss Justice, Klein waited patiently all afternoon at Minsk Street.

It was late afternoon when the Machinery Hivemind member, Carlson, rang his doorbell.

Klein didn't ask anything further. He followed the man to the Lever Cathedral near the West Balam dock and entered a threestory building next to the cathedral.

The signboard wrote: "Backlund Institute for Mechanical Research."

How academic... Klein suddenly thought of the Blackthorn Security Company and cracked the corner of his lips into a smile.

Under Carlson's guidance, he passed through some strange devices and found himself in a windowless room.

On the long table in the room, there were many items emitting strong spirituality, including the Human-skinned Shadow characteristic and the Specter Portrait Frame which was covered in black cloth. However, there were no characteristics left behind by the dead Beyonders.

Obviously, the higher-ups of the Machinery Hivemind don't want me to know about the Law of Indestructibility and Conservation... Klein wasn't the least bit surprised.

"You can choose one." The hatless Ikanser pointed at the long table.

Klein "scrutinized" the items several times before sighing.

"There's nothing I want.

"If I were to convert it into gold, how much would I get?"

He had already made up his mind that he wouldn't obtain the Human-skinned Shadow's characteristic from the Machinery Hivemind.

Although this could be explained as the need to create some mystical item or to try out a unique ritualistic magic, there was still a chance of exposing his own Sequence. In a situation where there was a better choice, Klein didn't want to take the risk.

Thus, he intended to take only money!

Not only would this help him gather the 2,500 pounds that the Psychology Alchemists quoted, but he could also effectively dispel the Machinery Hivemind's wariness towards him.

Ikanser was visibly relieved. He smoothed his hair and answered with a smile, "1,500 pounds.

"However, we encourage you to choose money, so a total of 2,000 pounds."

Klein immediately revealed a sincere smile. "Alright!"

With the help of a bestowment ritual, Klein handed 2,500 pounds in cash and the gold mask provided by The Hanged Man to Miss Justice, and he used the image of The World to urge her to close the deal as soon as possible.

I've spent almost 5,000 pounds in the past two weeks. If I didn't leave Tingen, this amount of money is enough for me to maintain a lifestyle just like my landlady's family... A doll ruins one's life, consuming potions bankrupts you for three generations [1]... Klein looked at the vast fog and the ancient palace, which had returned to silence. He was a little upset, as though he had lost something important.

He was quiet for a few seconds before returning to the real world. He picked up the remaining 830 pounds on his desk, and he counted out six five-pound notes.

Then, Klein put the thirty pounds of cash in his now deflated wallet and stuffed it solemnly into the inside pocket of his clothes.

He divided the other eight hundred pounds into two stacks, placing one stack in each of his side pockets.

After that, Klein opened the drawer and took out two of the five Deep-sea Naga hair strands that he had brought back to the real world. He wrapped them in layers after layers of paper and carefully put them into his pocket.

When he was done, he took his hat and cane, and he headed for the street corner under the glow of the street lamps at night. He got on a carriage and headed for the Bravehearts Bar in the Backlund Bridge area.

In the heated and noisy environment, Klein insisted on finishing his glass of Southville beer before he slowly made his way out of the bar and into a rental carriage through the thundering cheers for the boxers.

Taking in the rumbling of the wheels, he intentionally closed his eyes. Suddenly, he heard the sound of the window being lightly tapped.

Klein's facial muscles twitched slightly as he opened his eyes and looked in front of him. He saw the pale and exquisite Miss Sharron sitting quietly across him.

Without waiting for her to question him, Klein smiled and said, "I sold the information you gave me last time for a good price, the one about the Amon family tomb." Sharron looked at him silently.

Leaning his cane to the side, Klein took out two stacks of cash and a small clump of paper from his pocket.

"Eight hundred pounds plus two strands of Deep-sea Naga hair, for a total of about a thousand pounds; that's what you deserve." Klein took a silent breath and smiled as he handed over the cash and paper clump.

Sharron glanced at him and reached out her hand to take both items.

She lowered her head, looked at the items in her hand, and asked in an ethereal voice, "How much did you sell it for?"

"Two thousand pounds, so we split it equally." Klein chuckled.

If the Machinery Hivemind had only paid me 1,500 pounds according to the original plan, then I'll have to first owe you a portion of it... he thought gladly.

With a flip of Sharron's bloodless hand, the cash and the paper clump disappeared without a trace.

She raised her head and tersely acknowledged before asking succinctly, "What's in the tomb?"

"I don't know, I didn't go." Klein didn't disclose the help he had received from the magic mirror, Arrodes.

For an instant, he felt that if he described the experience in detail, Miss Sharron would've listened attentively with one hand on her cheek, as she had done before.

This Wraith lady seems to have a hobby of watching situational scenes and dramas or listening to all kinds of rumors... Klein summed up.

Sharron's expression didn't change. After a few seconds of silence, she said, "Someone is digging a tunnel to the underground ruin."

“Huh?” Klein wasn’t able to react for a moment to what Sharron was talking about.

However, he soon understood which underground ruin Sharron was referring to.

There was only one underground ruin the two of them knew of, and that was the Fourth Epoch Tudor Dynasty ruin.

Someone is digging their way into the underground structure? Klein pondered for a few seconds, then he suddenly came to a realization.

“Is it that baronet?”

He had already forgotten the name of the hidden Tudor Dynasty descendant, other than knowing that he had an aristocratic title of a baronet and that he lived on Sivellaus Street where the Backlund police station was located.

“Yes.” Sharron gave him a positive answer.

“What is he looking for? Doesn’t he know that there’s an evil spirit inside? Doesn’t he know that all the Beyonders from his family died in there?” Klein asked himself a few questions.

Sharron sat up straight and replied seriously, “I don’t know if he knows or not.”

“...How much longer will he take to dig through?” Klein asked in deliberation.

“Another two to three months, for the time being, he’s doing it on his own.” Sharron provided her own judgment.

Phew. Klein let out a small sigh.

“There’s no need to rush. When I’m ready, then we can go ‘visit’ him together.”

At this point, he explained with a smile, “As you know, I like to make sufficient preparations in advance.”

I won’t get involved in anything until I advance to Faceless! He warned himself inwardly.

"Alright." Sharron didn't ask him what he was going to do, but her figure faded quickly, and she disappeared from the carriage.

Klein leaned back against the wall, feeling relaxed.

The ingredients for the Faceless potion has been reserved, and I'm just waiting for the "delivery"... My debts have all been paid off, so there's nothing to worry about... His mood was like a fizzy wine that had settled. Occasionally, there would be a little bit of joy that would silently surge upwards.

The only problem is... Klein touched his left breast, where there was a shriveled wallet.

He sighed and said to himself silently, "Only thirty pounds in cash, five gold coins, and some change..."

...

Thursday afternoon.

Audrey Hall was waiting in the study for the arrival of Miss Escalante.

After receiving The Hanged Man's and The World's replies, she had immediately sent a servant to send a letter to Escalante.

The content of the letter was very ordinary. Audrey hoped that the second psychology class this week would be brought forward to Thursday. In reality, Audrey had already made an agreement with Escalante. Once she expressed such an intention, it would mean that the other party had agreed to the conditions.

Tick. Tock. The wall clock on the wall moved briskly, and Escalante with her waist-reaching long hair entered the room with several teaching materials in hand.

Audrey immediately gave Susie a look. The big golden retriever somewhat reluctantly leaped out, lay down in the nearby shadows, and observed the people coming and going.

Escalante closed the study door, looked around slowly, then sat down across the small white round table and put down the teaching materials.

“Are they paying for it in cash, or with some kind of mystical item?” this member of the Psychology Alchemists asked in a low voice.

“One directly gave 2,500 pounds, and one provided a mystical item.” Audrey flippantly took out a white cardboard box from her medium-sized orange handbag. The outside of the box was covered with a wall of spirituality.

After removing the wall of spirituality, she opened the lid of the box, revealing the simple golden mask.

Then, she recounted the flaws and effects of the mask.

To be honest, she was very curious when she received the mystical item. She had wished to test its effects since it was her first time coming into contact with a mystical item. However, she finally resisted her urges, as she didn’t wish to turn cold.

“It’s basically the same value.” Escalante tried it and breathed a sigh of relief.

After two seconds, she pulled out the thickest textbook and flipped to page 48.

The middle part of the textbook had been hollowed out. There was an iron box about the size of a palm and a rolled up piece of parchment.

“Human-skinned Shadow characteristic... Wind-blessed potion formula...” Escalante showed and introduced them to her.

Audrey’s gaze cast towards the characteristic which resembled a diamond. The face inside left her head spinning.

This... This has the ability to restrain a Spectator’s powers... Is this the Sequence pathway of Mr. World? No wonder... Audrey looked away and studied the formula.

“Sequence 6: Wind-blessed. Main ingredients: Six crystalline feathers of a Blue Shadow Falcon, a pair of Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyes...”

Before Audrey could examine the supplementary ingredients, Escalante rolled up the parchment in time.

After that, she set up the wall of spirituality around the metal box again, closed the textbook, and pushed the thick book towards Audrey.

Audrey held the book, but she didn't hand over the gold mask and 2,500 pounds to Escalante in a timely manner.

Seeing the look of puzzlement in Escalante's eyes, the prepared Audrey smiled and said, "The other party is worried that the characteristic doesn't match and that the formula is fake. They hope to verify it first.

"And before the verification, the money and items will all be held under my custody. All of them believe in my trustworthiness, and I do not wish to lose this reputation."

"I understand their concerns." Escalante paused for a moment before saying, "We trust you, too."

Since the money and items were in the hands of one of her own members, she wasn't worried about being cheated despite feeling upheavals.

Besides Miss Audrey is rich and powerful. She can be trusted to be a guarantor... Escalante thought with relief.

...

In the ancient palace above the fog.

Klein held a spirit pendulum in hand, divining the authenticity of the Wind-blessed potion formula.

He didn't wish to inadvertently lose the most experienced and powerful member of the Tarot Club, Mr. Hanged Man.

When he opened his eyes and saw the topaz pendant turning clockwise, Klein heaved a sigh of relief and sent his thoughts to the crimson star that symbolized The Hanged Man.

...

City of Generosity.

Alger first saw the endless gray fog before hearing Mr. Fool's low but distant voice.

“Miss Justice has completed the deal.”

An illusory piece of parchment appeared in front of Alger. On it was the Wind-blessed potion formula.

With the potion going through Mr. Fool’s hands, he had no qualms about the authenticity of the formula. He bowed his head respectfully and thanked him.

When the “illusion” dissipated, he immediately found a pen and paper to jot down the potion formula.

Then, he paced back and forth in excitement, muttering to himself, “Blue Shadow Falcon... That primitive island has it...”

...

After finishing the matter regarding The Hanged Man, Klein finally had the time to check his Human-skinned Shadow characteristic.

After confirming its authenticity, he relaxed and leaned back in his chair, exhaling happily.

Finally...

After three seconds, Klein suddenly sat up, and he decided that there was no time to lose. Tonight, he would concoct the Faceless potion!

---

1. This is a meme in Chinese, where the “doll” and “consuming potions” change depending on the joke.

15 Minsk Street, in the dank, cold kitchen.

Klein rummaged for his newly bought large iron pot, poured fresh water into it, and carefully scrubbed it several times.

Then, he dropped some matches into it and snapped his fingers.

The scarlet flames soared, and under his control, they quickly burned the remaining water droplets dry, without harming the surface of the pot.

This time, there were no ingredients such as pure water in the potion recipe, so Klein was even more careful than the previous two times. He wanted to ensure that everything was in good measure to prevent any problems.

Although he was able to divine whether the concoction would be successful or not, at least to not endanger his life, such a result could still involve his potion being ineffective. Attempting to extract the Beyonder characteristics from the concoction would be relatively difficult, just like the removal of the mental corruption of a Rampager. He would need the corresponding technique, methods, or rituals, and Klein wouldn't be able to gather a second round of ingredients within a short period of time either.

After finishing his preparations, Klein took a deep breath as he looked at the neatly arranged boxes. Finally, he recalled the potion recipe:

"Faceless:

Main ingredients: Mutated pituitary gland of a Thousand-faced Hunter, Characteristic of a Human-skinned Shadow.

Supplementary ingredients: 80 ml of a Thousand-faced Hunter's blood, 5 drops of black Jimsonweed juice, 10 grams of Dragon Tooth Grass powder, 3 strands of hair from a Deep-sea Naga."

He first picked up the cardboard box which came from Vampire Emlyn White. He opened the box and took out the glass bottle that contained 100 milliliters of a Thousand-faced Hunter's blood.

Glancing at the scale, Klein unscrewed the lid and steadily poured the sticky liquid into the pot with a stable wrist. The liquid changed its color depending on the variation in the lighting.

As it was a supplementary ingredient, he didn't pursue precision and didn't use chemical experiment apparatus to separate and titrate the liquid.

The Thousand-faced Hunter's blood was like thin honey that slowly filled the bottom of the pot. When Klein felt that it was about time, he stopped tilting it and allowed the liquid to flow back.

There's still about 20 milliliters left; my spiritual intuition is quite accurate... Klein withdrew his gaze from the glass bottle and tightened the lid. This 20 milliliters of Thousand-faced Hunter's blood could still be used to make mystical items, Beyonder weapons, extraordinary scrolls, or for drawing symbols or labels in some ritualistic magic. It was still very precious.

After putting the glass bottle back into the cotton-filled box, Klein went down the list and added the black Jimsonweed juice and the Dragon Tooth Grass powder. He saw that the liquid in the iron pot started to bubble.

Without pausing, he picked up three strands of dark blue hair that resembled tiny snakes with his black-gloved right hand, and he firmly placed them on the surface of the liquid.

Sizzle!

A faint mist rose from the iron pot, and the color of the liquid turned a deep blue.

It already has such a strange effect even without adding the main ingredients... As expected of a Sequence 6 potion... Klein reached out and grabbed the silver tin box which Vampire Emlyn White had thrown in as well.

With a snapping sound, Klein opened the lid of the box, revealing a peach-like item inside.

He didn't directly touch the Thousand-faced Hunter's mutated pituitary gland. Instead, he placed the tin box over the top of the pot and overturned it.

A yellow-brown object with the grooves and ridges of a brain fell in, crashing into the dark blue liquid.

At this moment, no liquid droplets splashed up, and the pituitary gland that was constantly changing its shape silently melted.

The colors of gray and yellowish-brown quickly merged with the dark blue, and the bubbling suddenly increased in size.

At this point, Klein was a little nervous, but he controlled himself. He picked up the last box and overturned the huge diamond-like Human-skinned Shadow characteristic into the pot.

All of a sudden, the mist converged, and even the glow of the gas lamps showed signs of being attracted and devoured as the room turned darker.

When everything returned to normal, Klein finally saw what the final potion looked like.

It was blackish-green all over, and from time to time, it would produce a bubble the size of an eye, and as if it had a life of its own, it would produce a burping sound every few seconds.

When the bubble reached the surface, it would immediately burst, and during this process, it would reflect light in a myriad of colors.

The colors combined to form a picture of different faces, and the facial features seemed to be a random combination.

Klein picked up the iron pot with one hand and poured the liquid inside into a glass bottle that he had prepared beforehand. Because of a potion's characteristics, not one bit was left in the pot.

Using divination to confirm that the degree of harm was acceptable, which meant that the potion had been successfully concocted, Klein took the Faceless potion bottle and walked steadily back to the second floor, entering the room with the curtains closed.

After locking the door, he sat on the edge of the bed and, with the help of Cogitation, calmed his slightly agitated and anxious mood.

After sitting upright for more than ten seconds, Klein twisted the cap off of the bottle, raised his right hand, and swiftly poured the entire potion into his mouth.

A slightly tingling sensation swished in his mouth and esophagus, and finally, it fermented into a numbing sensation that made him lose his senses.

Klein's psyche seemed to be extracted from his body as he had the feeling of being a bystander and saw his mouth, nose, ears, and eyes melting—his entire face was melting!

In just two or three seconds, his face and head had turned into what seemed like scorched white wax. His body was similarly abnormal; it was as if his bones and skin were being melted by blood.

No, I can't allow such a situation to continue developing! Klein knew that if he didn't keep it under control, he could be on the verge of losing control at any moment.

As a "spectator," he tried his best to pull his thoughts back to his body, trying to visualize the layers of stacked spherical lights and maintain his state of Cogitation.

After a brief but repeated attempt, he finally felt his body once again. He tried his best to control every tiny part of his body to hold onto his lower limit.

As the melting and dissolving assaulted him again and again, Klein lost sense of how long he held on for, but when it finally came to an end, he regained the feeling that his body belonged to him.

At that moment, he knew that he had finally broken through the threshold and was now a Sequence 6. He was now a Faceless!

Klein didn't sweat, but he was mentally exhausted. He barely got to his feet and walked to the full-length mirror, trying to observe what he looked like.

Under the gas lamp's illumination, he took two sudden steps back and caused the floor to reverberate.

The scene in the mirror was extremely shocking!

Klein saw that his face and exposed skin were covered with dense, pale granules. It would make any normal creature who saw those go numb and subconsciously resist. The more timid ones might even lose their mind.

Despite knowing the acting method, and having completely digested the Magician potion, my advancement to Sequence 6 was still rather difficult. I was only two to three steps away from losing control. I wonder how much of a risk those Beyonders who relied on the accumulation of time and barely qualified to consume the potion faced. The probability of failure definitely isn't low... It's no wonder Sequence 7 is relatively common among the members of the Churches, and they will shoulder the responsibility of captain or bishop, while the number of people at Sequence 6 begins to plummet... Klein closed his eyes and sat back in his chair.

With the help of Cogitation, he was able to restrain his overflowing spirituality and recover from his exhaustion.

After about ten minutes, the disgusting granules on his body had completely faded and merged into his flesh.

Phew. Klein exhaled, walked back to the full-length mirror, and he looked at his full-bearded appearance.

Suddenly, his facial hair began to squirm. His flesh and skin began to undergo a bizarre change like half-melted wax.

Within a second or two, Klein had reverted to his original appearance: black hair, brown eyes, ordinary facial features, a clean face with a deep outline, and a somewhat thin body.

He quietly gazed at his past self and stretched out his right hand to press it against his face.

With a gentle touch, Klein's face changed again. His nose bridge was high, his lips were extremely thin, and there was a tinge of elegance in

his handsome face. There was an unconcealable pride in his appearance. It was none other than Vampire Emlyn White.

A little too short... He laughed at himself.

At this moment, the bones and ligaments in his body began to produce cracking and snapping sounds as his entire body suddenly soared up a little. He now looked identical to Emlyn White, externally.

I've noticed that I can accurately recall the exterior appearance and temperament of every person I know, and I can grasp their unique scent... Klein's pores squirmed, and his body changed accordingly. The smell of his body became different as a result of this.

He looked into the full-length mirror again, letting his hairline slowly recede, and he changed the color of his eyes into a deep gray.

Without a sound, Dunn Smith seemed to come alive again, and he was staring at the team member who always came to him to report on unusual matters.

Letting out a breath, Klein returned to his original form, but the corners of his mouth remained curled upwards.

He thought for a moment, took a few steps back, and looked at the magazine, Ladies Aesthetics, which he had bought to look at fashionable beauties, and he noted down the appearance of the actress on the cover.

Then, he went back to the full-length mirror and wiped his face with his right hand.

When he looked in the mirror again, he saw a young lady with black hair that went past her shoulders and delicate facial features.

It really works... Klein looked down at his chest, but he didn't see any protrusions.

Trying hard to control his body, he managed to create a pair of A cups by moving his fat and some of his flesh.

However, there was nothing he could do about his lower body.

That is to say, it is just a superficial change in appearance, nothing fundamental... Also, I can only grow taller or shorter by 10 centimeters at the moment. Going beyond this range would be difficult... Also, there's a limit to the enlargement and shrinkage of the head. For example, I can't mimic Father Utravsky's half-giant head at all... Also, I can only observe the appearance and temperament of the target in an instant, without knowing anything related to him. It's easy for me to be exposed when facing a Spectator like Miss Justice... Heh heh, in the Clown stage, the Clown restrains the Spectator, but in the Faceless stage, it is actually somewhat restrained by the Spectator. Interesting...

Upon having this thought, Klein stopped changing and returned to the appearance of Sherlock Moriarty.

Divination, fighting, as well as a Magician's Beyonder powers, have all been enhanced. As for how much they've improved, it can only be confirmed through practice. I should find some time to head to the Quelaag Club tomorrow... Klein took one last look and went downstairs to clear up the mess.

After rounding up everything, he quickly washed up and crawled into bed.

Lying there, looking out the window at the crimson moonlight, he gradually calmed down.

After a few minutes of this, Klein slowly closed his eyes and smiled to himself.

Good night, Faceless.

Townshend Street, in between Empress Borough and West Borough.

Xio Derecha was standing in a dark, secluded alley. Even without looking up, she could see the countless magnificent palaces and tall Gothic towers in the distance.

It was the highest district in the whole of Backlund, and it was also where the Loen royal family resided.

It shared the same or even slightly higher status as the White Maple Palace of Intis and the Aurmir Palace of the Feysac Empire in the Southern and Northern Continent and in the entire world, but its name was neither romantic nor ancient.

It was called the Sodela Palace, and in ancient Feysac, it meant "balance."

Xio looked away from the famous "Bell of Order" and directed her sight to the other side of the alley.

In the shadows where the street lamps didn't shine, a figure slowly walked out.

The figure wore a golden mask that revealed the lower half of his face. He was none other than the mysterious person who had previously sold the Sheriff formula to Xio and had occasionally entrusted her with some tasks.

When Xio and Fors discussed in private, they both suspected that the person was from MI9.

"Any progress this week?" the man wearing the gold mask asked as per usual.

Xio shook her head.

"No, I don't think anyone was keeping tabs on Capim before the incident."

She paused for a moment, then she reluctantly asked, "Do you still want to continue investigating this matter?" The masked man was silent for a moment.

“There’s no need, but if you hear anything related in the future, then contact me right away.

“Today, I’ll give you a new mission.”

“What mission?” Xio was completely in her bounty hunter state, ready to assess the risks.

The masked guy laughed.

“This is a very simple mission, and it’s one that you’ve been dreaming of doing.

“Seek to purchase the Sheriff and Interrogator main ingredients in all your circles, especially a special ingredient that can be directly concocted into a potion. If someone responds to it, we will pay for it.”

“The purchased ingredients will belong to me?” Xio blurted out a response.

This was her greatest concern.

“No, do you believe that such a simple mission would have such a high reward? Of course, if you’re able to fish out the person we’re looking for, it’s not impossible to negotiate and let you obtain the main ingredients,” the masked man said with a chuckle.

“But I don’t know the main ingredients of the Interrogator potion...” Xio hesitantly said.

“I’ll tell you later. This is also our advance payment. Even if we don’t find the target, you’ll have the main portion of a Sequence 7 potion formula, worth more than 600 pounds. I think you’re fully aware of our generosity,” the masked man said in a bewitching tone.

Generous indeed... Who’s their target, and why are they willing to pay such a high price to find them? Well, if he were from MI9, taking advantage of this mission to retrieve the Beyonder ingredients of the Arbiter pathway on the market should also be one of his goals. There’s no problem about wasting money... As quite an experienced bounty hunter, Xio instinctively thought of a few things.

After some deliberation, she nodded and said, “I’ll take this commission.”

“Very good.” The masked man’s tone turned relaxed as he surveyed his surroundings and said, “The Interrogator potion’s main ingredients are the horn of a Flash-patterned Black Snake and dust of a Lake Spirit.”

After saying that, he slowly retreated and melded into the shadows, disappearing into the corner of the alley.

“He really told me the main ingredients of the Interrogator potion...” Xio was momentarily stunned.

Only at that point did she clearly realize how much importance the masked man’s faction placed on this mission.

I wonder who their target is. It seems to be focused on some special ingredient that can be used to directly concoct a Sheriff or Interrogator potion... With this in mind, Xio suddenly froze up.

She remembered one thing. When she advanced to Sheriff, she had used a special ingredient she had bought through Fors, one that could be used to concoct the corresponding potion!

This... Is that their target? Xio instinctively decided to keep silent on this matter, to never tell the masked man anything.

She rubbed her fat baby cheeks and walked towards the street outside, ready to take a public carriage back to Cherwood Borough.

At that moment, she saw a brown carriage drive past. Her eyes were instantly attracted by the coat of arms on the carriage.

The coat of arms consisted of a single flower and two rings. There was nothing special about it, but Xio stared at it in a daze as though her gaze had frozen.

It was only when the carriage was far away, did she withdraw her gaze. Her mood immediately reached rock bottom. It didn’t turn for the better, even when she returned to the shared rented house.

Seeing that her friend was in a bad mood, Fors poured two glasses of red wine and brought them to her.

“What happened?” She sat across her and pushed one of the glasses toward Xio.

Xio looked down at the red wine. After a full two minutes of silence, she said in a slightly hoarse voice, “On the way back, I met someone I used to know.”

“Who?” Fors asked, cooperatively.

“Viscount Stratford,” Xio replied to any question she received without elaborating.

Fors thought for a moment and then she said, “This Viscount seems to be the captain of the royal guards?”

As a best-selling novel author, she would receive invitations from noblemen who liked literature and participated in afternoon tea parties and banquets from time to time. With her professional habits of collecting material as a writer, she would certainly volunteer to understand more famous noblemen.

It was at such a party that she got to know Viscount Glaint.

“Yes, he used to be my father’s deputy,” Xio said with some difficulty.

“Your father?” Fors knew that Xio came from a fallen aristocratic family and had some secrets. However, she didn’t know the specifics.

Xio picked up the glass of red wine and gulped it down, coughing a few times after she choked.

After calming herself down, she said, “My family was once part of the aristocracy. In its heyday, it even served as an earl palatine.”

“Earl palatine? What position is that?” Fors asked, half curious, half trying to soothe her friend’s mood.

“It’s equivalent to being the spokesperson for the royal family, nobles that are the closest to the throne,” Xio said in recollection, her face jubilant. “From that moment forth, our family had the fief a true earl would have, but it wasn’t as illustrious during the time of my father. However, we still held the trust of the former king, Might-wielder William VI. He was the leader of the Household Guards Division and the captain of the royal guards.”

Her tone gradually turned melancholic as she found it difficult to hide her pain.

“But seven years ago, he was accused of participating in a revolt, and he was eventually executed and deprived of his aristocratic title and fiefdom.

“Because of this, my family fell from grace, and many of my family members even died for no reason. In order to live, we changed our surnames and left East Tucker County...

“I don’t believe that my father would engage in mutiny. He was so loyal to the royal family, even more so than his belief in the Goddess! In order to... Anyway, I left my mother and my younger brother and came to Backlund, looking for a chance to improve myself, hoping to restore my family’s glory and my father’s reputation.”

Xio was vague about some of the things midway through her recount, but Fors didn’t mind. She sighed and said, “It’ll be very, very difficult.”

But she immediately smiled.

“But I will support you!”

And behind me is the mysterious Tarot Club! she added in her mind.

...

Night time in Tingen City, 2 Daffodil Street.

Melissa, who was doing math problems, turned her head to the door and looked at Benson who had just taken off his half top hat.

“Where did you go? Aren’t the results announced tomorrow?”
“They’re already available tonight, and I happen to know two of the city’s employees who are in charge of the unified exam,” Benson said with a smirk.

In early December, he had enrolled for the Civil Servant Unified Examination, selected a relatively uncompetitive position, and, in the process, established friendships with several civil servants and a number of examination candidates through his eloquence and communication skills.

“What was the result?” Melissa unconsciously put down the fountain pen in her hand.

Benson's expression immediately darkened, but before Melissa could open her mouth, he revealed a bright smile.

"I passed!

"And I'm ranked quite high!"

"That's great..." Melissa stood up and took two steps forward. "You have to start preparing for the second round of exams at the end of January. It's held in Backlund. I need to prepare your luggage for you ahead of time... When are you planning on leaving?"

Seeing his sister's concern, Benson walked into the living room, smiled and said, "I plan to do so after the new year. We'll go to Backlund together and rent a house there.

"Regardless of the success of the exam, I'm prepared to stay in Backlund and try my luck. And you can take advantage of the New Year's holiday to transfer to the technical school in Backlund to prepare for the entrance exam at the Backlund University of Technology and Industry in June."

Just a month ago, the Backlund Polytechnic of Technology and Industry had been reorganized and officially upgraded to a university for industry and technology.

Melissa's lips unconsciously pursed as she quietly listened.

She looked around wistfully and replied softly, "Okay."

...

Friday afternoon at the Quelaag Club.

Klein walked out and hired a carriage to head for Prince Edessak's Red Rose Manor.

It was the place where Talim had gone to a few days before his death. As a qualified detective, he would be completely unworthy of the 100 pounds he was paid, if he didn't hold any investigations there.

No matter what, I still have to put on a convincing act... Klein muttered as he sat in the carriage and enjoyed the scenery outside the window.

After his morning practice, he had roughly grasped the range of improvements in every aspect. Flame Controlling, Flaming Jump, and other Beyonder powers had become about 30% stronger. The might of Air Bullets and the length of the Underwater Breathing pipe had even increased severalfold. His divination and combat skills had also received a substantial improvement.

Paper Figurine Substitutes and Damage Transfer didn't experience much change, but because of the growth of his spirituality, the number of times that they could be used had increased.

Klein finally arrived at Red Rose Manor amidst the rumbling journey and informed the two soldiers guarding the entrance of his purpose.

After passing the news, he met the old butler from before.

"You can ask everyone here." The white-haired elderly butler paused, then added, "Except that lady."

That's what I want. I don't want to get into trouble... Klein laughed casually.

"Alright!"

Red Rose Manor, outside the luxurious rooms filled with all kinds of antiques.

Klein stood at the door and asked the sixth maid he had met today.

The young maid was wearing a black-and-white servant dress that had the characteristics of the times. She was pretty, in her prime, and had natural curls to her brown hair. She had a hint of playfulness on her face.

"Who does Mr. Talim meet when he visits?" Klein repeated the question numbly.

The maid replied almost without a pause, "Mr. Talim usually requests to meet His Highness, or to accompany him in riding horses, or to discuss matters. If His Highness happens to be absent, he will meet with that lady. They are very good friends. He receives permission from the butler."

Talim is good friends with the commoner lady who Prince Edessak likes? Meeting in private from time to time? It was likely that he was persuading her to leave this place, so as to not affect the reputation of the Prince... Klein nodded thoughtfully.

"They, I mean—Mr. Talim and the young lady, what would they talk about?"

When he asked this question, Klein suddenly recalled how Talim had fallen in love just recently. With his rich "experience" from the information age, he somehow came up with an extremely contrived romance story.

The maid wasn't afraid of the detective. She smiled, shook her head, and said, "At times like these, we're all asked to leave the room."

This... Even more than ever, Klein couldn't resist making associations, even to the point of changing the colors [1] of Prince Edessak's hat and helmet.

Without waiting for him to ask any further questions, the maid chuckled and said, "Detective Moriarty, if you want to find out exactly

what the lady and Mr. Talim were talking about, you can ask her directly."

"The old butler doesn't permit that." Klein confidently pushed out his scapegoat.

He changed the topic and said with a smile, "You seem to know more than the other servants. You even know to call me Detective Moriarty."

The maid looked around, maintained her smile, and said, "It's because I've been serving the lady during my rotations. She's always wanted to meet you, Detective Moriarty. After all, she's close friends with Mr. Talim and cares a great deal about his death.

"Unfortunately, she always ends up missing you."

"Always?" Klein was sensitive to the words "always," "just happened," and "missed."

The maid nodded seriously and said, "The first time His Highness invited you to be his guest, she intentionally threw a tantrum and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to walk downstairs to meet you. Who knew that you would leave in a hurry.

"Afterwards, she took the initiative to represent His Highness to place flowers on Mr. Talim's grave, but as she didn't know what you looked like, she wasn't able to find you.

"And today, she just happened to go to the golf course out back to relax on horseback. Otherwise, even if the butler didn't allow it, she would've tried to find a way to meet you."

What a coincidence... Klein sighed as he suddenly grasped a crucial point.

On the day of Talim's funeral, it was the commoner lady he loved who had offered flowers in the prince's place!

On that day, Klein was most concerned about the lady with the black veil and the sapphire ring on her finger. She might have a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or some powerful existence of an equal level!

All of a sudden, a thought flashed through Klein's mind—*the woman with the sapphire ring on her finger was wearing a long, heavy black*

dress. Accompanied by two maids, she slowly disappeared into the distance...

One of the ladies had brown natural curls.

The image of the maid quickly overlapped with the one in front of Klein, and it was abnormally identical!

Klein's body tensed up, and sweat rolled down his back, but his expression didn't change at all.

Using the abilities of a Clown, he pretended like he was recalling the event, and he asked with a smile, "Were you with that lady on the day of Talim's funeral?"

The maid replied without much thought, "Yes."

...Damn, it's really her! Klein maintained his smile.

"Very well, next question."

As if nothing had happened, he began to inquire about other things, then he switched to another servant and continued.

However, Klein secretly shortened the process and sped up the progress.

He wanted to leave Red Rose Manor before the young lady returned from her riding!

At four o'clock in the afternoon, before the sky had turned dark, Klein left the manor much earlier than expected and took the carriage sent by the old butler back to the city.

Sitting in the window with his back against the wall wrapped in silk and muslin, he was relieved to have the energy to reflect on the whole situation—*it was Prince Edessak's beloved commoner lady who had cursed Talim...*

Why did she have to deal with a descendant of a fallen noble family? To take revenge against Talim for trying to break up the relationship between her and the prince?

But there's no need for her to do it herself. She can find a chance to mention it while in bed. Prince Edessak has plenty of ways to make Talim disappear without a sound...

Talim was in a state of deep love before he died. Yes... The first sign was after he successfully persuaded the commoner lady to leave Prince Edessak... They had an affair? So, the commoner lady who was brought back to the manor killed Talim in order to silence him and remove any latent dangers?

Logically speaking, it makes sense, but the problem is how could a person with a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a powerhouse of an equivalent level be restricted by Prince Edessak? Even if the Augustus family is an Angel Family, with the accumulation of enough knowledge, they would still need to use tremendous strength and special methods to be able to restrain someone like that. This isn't something a prince can do...

Besides, how could such a figure have taken a fancy to Talim?

Why does she want to see me all the time? Did she sense that I'm using the gray fog to spy on her?

No, if that were the case, I would've been buried with Talim on the day of his funeral... Besides, when she first wanted to see me, I didn't have any blood, hair, or belongings. I hadn't made any divinations yet!

Klein was puzzled as he thought about it. In the end, he decided to bury the problem deep within his heart. He wasn't to probe or investigate!

I hope that the Machinery Hivemind, with my earlier reminder, will pay importance to this matter of noticing the royal family's abnormality. Yes, they might regard it with great importance— not because of Prince Edessak's reputation, but for another reason! I hope the royal family continues to prevent the lady from visiting me... After a few days, when the time is right, I'll relinquish this mission, express how powerless I am on this matter, and then use the excuse of going to the south for a holiday, to change my identity and hide for a while! Klein's heart gradually calmed down.

...

Evenings in Backlund were always replaced by dark clouds and drizzling rain, and Klein, who felt physically and mentally exhausted, held down his half top hat and walked quickly across the wet street to No. 15 Minsk Street under the illumination of the street lamps.

After resting for a bit and taking advantage of the dark surroundings, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog.

After advancing to Sequence 6 Faceless, he had always wanted to check the mysterious space to see if there were any changes. However, as he was too tired last night and couldn't wake up in the middle of the night, he had to wait until he was done being "busy" outside.

In addition, Klein had to eliminate any interference in order to divine a particular matter.

That was, after this advancement, when his spirituality wasn't stable yet, he didn't hear the illusory ravings of "Hornacis... Flegrea... Hornacis... Flegrea... Hornacis... Flegrea..." anymore!

He wanted to know if this was a natural change after ascending to Sequence 6, or if there was some other reason.

Within the majestic palace, the mottled bronze tables and the twenty-two high back chairs with different symbols on their backs stood quietly, as if they had remained unchanged since time immemorial.

The same was true for the gray fog below them, as well as the endless emptiness around them.

But as soon as Klein entered, his spiritual intuition was keenly aware that the mysterious space was somewhat different from before.

He was in no hurry to explore or make any attempts. Calming himself down, he sat at the end of the table, conjured a pen and paper, and wrote a divination statement: "The reason why I haven't heard any ravings after my advancement."

Holding the piece of paper and muttering the sentence, Klein leaned back in his chair and quickly entered the dreamland with the help of Cogitation.

In the dusky sky and land, images flashed, and in the end, they all came to a stop on a particular scene.

It was Klein, whose face and body was still covered in pale granules. He was surrounded by an illusory, thin layer of gray fog that was undetectable.

The dream shattered. Klein opened his eyes and roughly understood the reason.

The gray fog has interwoven with reality, helping me block out the ravings that come from who knows where...

After advancing to Sequence 6, my connection with the mysterious space above the gray fog has become even stronger; thus, bringing about certain changes and allowing me to naturally borrow a portion of its powers?

From the looks of it, that should be the case.

Yes, I should try to explore the area and see if there are any changes.

Klein slowly stood up and followed his spiritual perception, walking in a certain direction outside the ancient palace. Beneath his feet was the gray fog that spread out like the sea.

He finally decided to stop after walking for an unknown period of time. However, when he gave up on exploring, a light suddenly flickered at the end of the path.

In his joy, Klein quickened his pace and approached.

Seven or eight seconds later, he saw a flight of stairs that seemed to lead to heaven!

The staircase was formed from pure light. It was holy, transparent, and untainted, capable of shocking anyone's heart.

There were only four levels as the staircase reached up into the void, and each level was rather high, as though it was meant for creatures even larger than giants.

Klein looked up, followed its path, and saw a layer of grayish white fog, condensed and suspended in midair, as though it was supporting something. It was a significant distance from the staircase of light.

The four-stepped staircase represents my consumption of the Sequence 9, Sequence 8, Sequence 7, and Sequence 6 potions? What exactly is above that layer of fog? Klein cautiously advanced until he reached the staircase of light and stepped onto it.

There was nothing odd about the steps, and they were as solid as stone.

Klein went up the stairs, climbed up to the fourth level, and then tried to look up at the area above the gray fog. Unfortunately, his vision couldn't penetrate anything.

He thought for a moment, then he took two steps forward and jumped up with all his might.

However, the moment he left the staircase of light, he lost his momentum and his Spirit Body's flight instinct. He plummeted straight down and landed on the bottom layer of the gray fog.

Looks like I need to advance another two to three other Sequences. If Sequence 4 really does result in a qualitative change, then I should be able to see after becoming a demigod... Klein looked up and made a judgment.

---

1. Implying that it turns green, which in Chinese means being cuckolded.

After looking around, Klein, who had found nothing else, returned to the stone pillar-propped ancient palace.

He sat at the head of the long bronze table with his eyes halfclosed. He examined his spirituality growth with the number of members he could draw in.

Including the empty positions that I could handle from before, I can still recruit four new members. However, there are no suitable targets at the moment... Klein shook his head and muttered before returning to the real world to busy himself for a good dinner.

After slicing potatoes, boiling beef, adding onions, and stir-frying them for a while, as well as sprinkling seasonings like sugar and pepper, Klein poured the prepared hot water into the saucepan, covered it with a lid, and turned the fire down.

I have to admit that a Magician's Flame Controlling is a good helper in the kitchen... Ever since I got it, my culinary skills have clearly improved... If it wasn't for the loss of control, the monsters, the searches, and the evil gods, the world would be at peace and perfect if everyone was dedicated to using their abilities without causing public damage... Klein sighed and left the kitchen to enter the living room.

As the light from the wall lamps spilled out, Klein, who had been planning on flipping through magazines and wait for the appropriate time to throw in the potatoes, carrots, and the proper amount of salt, he couldn't help thinking about how to act as a Faceless.

Just after waking up this morning, my spirituality had completely stabilized. I discovered that although there aren't any signs of digesting the Faceless potion in me, I do have a certain level of harmony. This is a phenomenon that never happened after consuming the Seer, Clown, and Magician potions...

With this in mind, Klein looked up at the oriel window. As it was already dark outside, it had become like a mirror, faithfully reflecting Sherlock Moriarty with his black hair, brown eyes, beard, and gold-rimmed glasses.

Klein nodded thoughtfully.

Perhaps it's because I've always been acting as Klein Moretti. Yes... In a way, Sherlock Moriarty is just Klein's disguise—not someone else.

Although I've received many memory fragments and gained some of the original's feelings that previously existed, in essence, I'm still a guest from an alternate world. I am Earth's keyboard warrior, Zhou Mingrui.

I've been through so much in the last five months that sometimes I even think I'm Klein Moretti.

Amidst the silence, many thoughts flashed through Klein's mind, giving him a lot of insight.

However, I'm still Zhou Mingrui who's donning the skin of Klein Moretti... Someone who has never given up the idea of returning... He slowly closed his eyes. When he opened them again, the figure reflected on the oriel window had already changed.

It was a young man with dark brown eyes and short black hair. His facial features were unremarkable, and he appeared refined, but he had obvious eye bags with an inkling of a double chin.

This was Zhou Mingrui from Earth.

Long time no see... Klein sighed, raised his hands and rubbed his face.

By the time he lowered his arms, he was back as Sherlock Moriarty.

After this period of contemplation and adjustment, he inexplicably felt that the gap between his spirituality and the potion had reduced significantly, and there were signs of them slowly blending together.

No wonder Marionettist Rosago's teacher, yes—perhaps his teacher would say that you can disguise yourself as anyone, but you are ultimately yourself... This is likely a core principle of a Faceless's acting method. Once one forgets this point, it would be easy to forget yourself amidst the constant changes, eventually turning into a monster. Klein felt enlightened when he recalled what he had previously obtained via spirit channeling.

He crossed his right leg and leaned back, quickly coming up with a plan for the future.

Search for and conclude the actual acting principles for a

Faceless...

In the Beyonder circles of Backlund, through the Tarot Club, gather information about mermaids, in preparation to complete the ritual at sea...

Directly or indirectly get the Solar High Priest potion formula to help Little Sun advance to Sequence 7, so that he has the clearance to obtain the method for removing a Rampager's mental corruption on a Beyonder characteristic.

But I can't fully place my hopes on Little Sun. I should still attempt to look.

Klein, whose mood was slowly turning staid, snapped his fingers, reducing the stove's fire in the kitchen as the fragrance of beef emanated.

At that moment, he heard the doorbell ring.

The visitor was none other than Lawyer Jurgen.

Even though it was drizzling and the ground was wet, Jurgen was still dressed meticulously. He even wore a vertical collar.

"What's the matter?" Klein, who was very familiar with Jurgen, didn't make any small talk and directly asked.

Jurgen put away his black umbrella, patted a few drops of water off of his double-breasted frock coat and said, "Sherlock, I'm leaving Backlund on Monday next week to go south on a holiday with my grandmother. The warm environment and the clean air suits her very well."

"That's excellent news." Klein took the initiative to deduce, smiling as he asked, "You want me to temporarily adopt Brody?" Jurgen shook his head gravely.

“My grandma can’t bear to part with Brody and insisted on taking him with her. I’ve already asked; as long as we put him in a cage and buy a full-price ticket, he can board the steam locomotive, but we have to keep the cage clean at all times to not pollute the air above.”

Honestly, the smell in the third-class carriage is enough to overwhelm the stench of cat poop... Klein chuckled.

“Brody shouldn’t be too happy to leave, right?”

“But he’s even more reluctant to part with my grandmother,” Jurgen replied.

He pressed his hat and changed the subject.

“I’m here to inform you that if you need to be released on bail or settle any legal disputes during this period of time, you can go to my colleague. Here is his business card; I’ve already informed him, and he wouldn’t be leaving Backlund this year.”

What a professional, to think that he even considered this problem... However, I don’t need to do that for now. I’m now an informant for the Machinery Hivemind, and I won’t be remanded at the police station under normal circumstances... Klein thanked him with a smile, took the name card, and slipped it into his pocket.

Jurgen didn’t have any intention of chatting or entering the room. He immediately raised his hand and said, “I still have to visit the rest of my clients. Sherlock, I’ll see you tomorrow. No— I’ll see you next year.”

“Then, I must wish your family a happy new year in advance.” Klein smiled and waved.

After watching Jurgen leave with his umbrella, Klein closed the door and sat back down in the living room.

At this moment, apart from the flame which was licking the bottom of the pot in the kitchen, there were no other sounds coming from the house. It was so quiet that Klein could hear the carriages outside moving in the distance.

He looked around slowly and saw the coffee table, contracts, cupboards, pens, porcelain cups, dining table, chairs, and walls.

Retracting his gaze, Klein leaned back against the sofa and looked out the window at the dark night and the street lamps emitting a misty glow in the dark. In the deep cold silence, he sighed.

“The new year...”

...

The lightning gradually calmed down, and the darkness became the ruler of the earth. The exploratory team from the City of Silver finally reached their destination after a short but, at the same time, not short trek and numerous battles.

On both sides of the street, most of the houses had collapsed. Only a few could barely hold on, but their surfaces were mottled with the dust of time.

With the help of an animal hide lantern whose light didn’t reach far, Derrick Berg saw the completely collapsed walls and streets that were in such ruin that even weeds didn’t grow.

On both sides of the streets were half-collapsed houses, with a tiny minority barely standing. However, their surfaces were mottled and filled with signs of aging.

The white and blue colors that formed the foundation of the coatings, the pointed structures which were different from the City of Silver, had already turned gray, making it hard for anyone to imagine their original appearance.

However, Derrick could figure out the city’s past through such observations. It had definitely experienced a long history with a considerable number of inhabitants, developing its own civilization in the dark ages.

The humans here took potions, built and repaired buildings, and defended the city wall. About six teams or more had explored the outside and hunted monsters in search of the necessary resources to survive.

They would celebrate for any brief periods of calm, offering sacrifices to the gods and yearning for a response. They gave birth to the next generation, allowing hope to continue.

However, in the end, they disappeared into the darkness, losing all their voices and leaving behind only ruins.

The ruins were like a huge grave, burying a civilization that had struggled to survive but eventually vanishing dismally.

Demon Hunter Colin looked around, his expression somewhat solemn, as though he saw the future of the City of Silver.

He pointed ahead and said, “The other places have already been cleared.

“The temple is in the center of the city.”

The exploratory team dispersed a bit, but they still maintained sufficient order and didn’t let down their guard.

After passing through ruins that had been destroyed for an unknown period of time and went past streets so quiet that they drove people mad, Derrick finally saw a high, wide artificiallymade platform.

On top of the high platform, there was a half-collapsed building. It looked extremely similar to the temples in the City of Silver. It had a dome propped up by pillars, creating an arched entrance.

The style of the buildings here was completely different from that of the other buildings. It really is true that they later converted to the Fallen Creator... The thought had barely crossed Derrick’s mind when the four lanterns in the team went out at the same time!

All of a sudden, the exploratory team was plunged into pure darkness. There was no lightning in the sky, the candles on the ground had extinguished, and all human breathing seemed to disappear at once.

Derrick’s body immediately tensed, as he felt as if some monster had stuck its tongue out in the darkness and was trying to lick his scalp, but his spiritual perception told him that nothing real had appeared.

At that moment, an immature, helpless, terrified, and dry voice sounded out by his ear.

It was a child whispering, “Save me... Save me...”

For a moment Derrick froze, not knowing how to react, but in an instant, a coruscating glimmer of dust appeared before him.

The dust exploded one after another, igniting a silvery white light that illuminated the surrounding area.

Colin stared at Derrick and said in a deep voice, “What’s on your mind?”

Derrick instantly snapped to his senses and clasped his hands in shame and pressed them to his mouth and nose as if in prayer.

His body immediately emitted rays of clean, pure light, causing the surrounding darkness to silently disperse.

The other team members seized the moment to reignite the candles.

Because of the Demon Hunter’s timely reaction, no members disappeared this time, nor were there any new members appearing.

Collin retracted his gaze from Derrick and looked at the halfcollapsed temple on the high platform. He solemnly said, “From now on, we can’t afford to be careless. We have to be on full alert.”

Within the half-collapsed temple, only a few stone pillars remained intact as they collectively supported half of the main hall.

At the very front of the main hall, there was an altar covered in cracks. In the middle of the altar, there was a huge, pitch-black cross.

Hanging from the cross was a naked man who was hanging upside down. Around his ankles, thighs, and torso there were obvious rusty metal spikes protruding outward that were accompanied by bright red bloodstains.

Derrick knew that this was the statue of the Fallen Creator, but he couldn't help look down to size up the statue's face.

He saw the face of the statue—the nose, mouth, and ears were all blurry, except for the eyes which were carved with abnormal clarity.

The Fallen Creator's eyes were tightly shut, as though he was suffering from guilt and pain.

"Look away, don't study the statue of an evil god!" Demon Hunter Colin warned in a low voice.

"Yes, Your Excellency." The few members of the exploratory team immediately retracted their gazes.

Before today, although the City of Silver had discovered many destroyed cities and written records pointing to evil gods during their explorations, most of the residents had never seen the statues of so-called evil gods.

The remaining area of the temple wasn't very wide, so the exploratory team quickly split up into groups of two or three and completed the investigations without finding anything abnormal.

Upon seeing this, Colin, the chief of the six-member council, said after a few seconds of deliberation, "Let's head underground."

As he spoke, he drew one of the two swords he carried on his back and smeared it with a grayish silver ointment.

Then, he removed a small metal bottle from a hidden compartment on his belt, pulled out the stopper, and gulped the contents of the potion.

At this moment, Derrick felt as if the light blue eyes of the Chief had become a little brighter.

The members of the exploratory team made their utmost careful preparations. Under the illumination of the four animal hide lanterns, they followed the stairs on the left side of the statue as they walked down into the underground area.

Derrick took his turn holding the lantern, walking at the front left as he cautiously entered the darkness.

He heard the sound of his own footsteps and those of his companions echoing off of the stone steps. They produced a distant and empty echo.

The echoes didn't suffer from any interference, making the absolute silence beneath them obvious. However, in the hearts of the exploratory team members, it was like a knock on the door. The attempt to uncover a secret that had been buried for an unknown number of years left them feeling extremely tense.

After walking without having any sense of time, Derrick finally saw that the road ahead had turned flat. He also saw the newly discovered mural which the corrupted Darc Regence had mentioned.

The mural was spread across two sides of the wall. It was simply colored and gloomy, looking ancient as if it had seen the vicissitudes of life.

Derrick took a casual glance and was immediately attracted by one of the murals.

On the wall to the left up ahead, a pure white cross was depicted in the middle. It was surrounded by seawater-like blackness, drowning all the humans who were struggling as they stretched out their arms.

Hanging upside down from the cross was the Fallen Creator. The rusted nails and blood-red stains were no different from the statues in the outside world.

But in this mural, the Fallen Creator was suffering from a black erosion, so much so that part of the white of the cross had become pitch-black.

In addition, the cross supported a hazy piece of land, and countless humans were kneeling and praying to the Fallen Creator.

Around the mural, in the deepest part of the darkness, there were six figures akin to evil gods.

In the upper left corner was a woman wearing a black, classical dress. Her clothes were layered but not complicated, and it was embedded with a starry sheen. Her body was relatively ethereal, with signs of rippling outward. Her face was blurry, as though she was wearing a mask without any facial features.

The darkness around her surged as one strange eye after another faintly became discernible.

Directly above was a young man wearing a pure white robe. His face was painted with a pure gold color, and there were tentacles in the form of light growing out of his skin.

In his hands was a putrid-green book and a radiant spear, and his chest and back were inverted.

In the upper right corner was a trident-wielding monster with an octopus-like head, wide eyes, and a body wrapped in lightning.

The feathers of countless birds formed his cloak, and the darkness turned into waves that supported the bottom of his feet.

At the bottom right was a supple and beautiful woman. Her chest bulged, propping her clothes up. In her arms was a rotting baby, and at her feet were black ears of wheat, spring water squirming with flesh, herbs dripping with pus, and wildly-mating animals.

Directly below was an old man wearing a hood that revealed his mouth, wrinkles, and a white beard.

The old man held an open book, and on top of it was an eye that was the symbol of omniscience.

At first glance, this old man looked the most normal, but the smile on his face was indescribably evil.

At the bottom left was a giant warrior in tattered armor. He held a long sword and was sitting on a throne with bleak dusk as its backdrop.

What this mural means is that when the Cataclysm struck, the evil gods climbed out of the Abyss. In order to save the people of the world, the Fallen Creator had suffered the vast majority of the sins and pain, and as a result, showed signs of being corrupted and having his image change... But, I think "He" is the worst evil god... Carrying an animal hide lantern in his hand, Derrick looked at the mural on the wall as he walked. He realized that the description was identical to Darc Regence's description with the core theme being that the place where they were had not been abandoned by the gods. Instead, it was blessed by the Creator and had maintained civilization through the apocalypse.

Of course, Darc Regence had only briefly mentioned it, and the details were far what the murals depicted.

Throughout the entire process, Derrick didn't let his guard down. He prepared himself in case any accidents were to happen so that he could respond immediately.

Under the dim yellow light of the candle, the exploratory team went through many corridors, halls, and rooms one by one, delving deep into the temple's basement.

Suddenly, a semi-open gray stone door appeared in front of them.

Outside the door, a cluster of beautiful mushroom-shaped objects grew. They were palm-sized, with white stems and bright red heads, sparkling with dark-golden specks.

Upon seeing these "mushrooms," the members of the exploratory team had their appetites whet. All they wanted to do was to rush over, pull out a stalk, and stuff it into their mouths.

Gulp. Quite a few people swallowed their saliva.

However, most of the people who were able to enter the exploratory team had rich experience and were of a relatively high Sequence.

Having received a warning beforehand, someone immediately stood up and said in a low voice, “Those are rotten flesh and hairy scalps.”

Derrick knew this teammate and that his name was Joshua. He had successfully traded for a mystical item from a particular exploratory expedition.

Joshua stretched out his left, scarlet-gloved hand at the door.

With a flash of light, a burning fireball quickly took shape and shot out, landing directly on those extremely tempting “mushrooms.”

Boom! The ground trembled slightly, and an inferno spread out to cover the space of two meters.

By the time the fire subsided, all of the mushrooms had already disappeared, leaving only bits and pieces of flesh and blood. It left all of the Beyonders, who nearly failed to resist the temptation, disgusted.

Demon Hunter Colin didn’t interfere with the actions of the team. He quietly watched from the side, nodding from time to time.

“Why would there be mushrooms made from flesh and hair? Where did the flesh and hair come from?” Joshua withdrew his left palm and muttered to himself in confusion.

Another member of the team made a bold guess.

“The original inhabitants of this city?”

It’s possible... Perhaps their deaths were a result of turning into pure flesh and hair... Derrick agreed inwardly.

After a brief discussion, the exploratory team split into several groups and cleaned up the hall outside the gray stone door.

After doing all this, they regrouped and slowly passed through the door, ready to engage in combat at any moment.

Behind the door was a place that looked like an altar. The surrounding light could hardly dispel the darkness of the region which seemed to hide something unknown.

Above the altar, a similar pitch-black cross and an upside-down Fallen Creator was erected there.

Carrying an animal hide lantern, Derrick stood the closest as he instinctively swept a glance.

His gaze suddenly froze because he discovered that the Fallen Creator statue here was different from the one outside.

Its eyes were open!

He had blood-red eyes and black pupils, staring straight at any intruders like it possessed life.

Tat. Tat. Tat. Derrick heard the chattering of teeth.

He originally imagined that it came from a team member, but he soon realized that he was the one trembling!

Although he didn't understand much about the evil god's dangers, his teeth were instinctively chattering at that instant.

Tat. Tat. Tat.

His teammates reacted similarly.

At that moment, a speck of powder floated into the air. Demon Hunter Colin clenched his fist.

Boom!

As the sound of thunder reverberated through the air, Derrick and the others suddenly snapped to their senses, escaping their "nightmare" state from earlier.

Before they could investigate the area, the sound of weeping could be heard from behind the altar.

"Sob, sob, sob...

"Sob, sob, sob..."

In the chilling silence, Demon Hunter Colin calmly ordered, "Derrick, Joshua, go around and take a look."

As a chill went through his body, Derrick held the animal hide lantern and the Axe of Hurricane in his hand. Together with Joshua, he slowly walked around to the back of the altar.

As the darkness was gradually dispersed by the light, they saw a black figure curled up behind the altar.

After taking two steps forward, the shadow revealed its original form.

It was a seven- or eight-year-old child, with soft yellow hair.

He closed his eyes, as though he wasn't used to the light as he shouted in excitement, "Save me, save me..."

Derrick's pupils shrank, and when he thought of the cry for help he had heard in the pure darkness earlier, he subconsciously lifted his Axe of Hurricane.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin took a step forward and solemnly asked, "Who are you?"

The child stopped pleading for help and said reminiscently, "My name... My name is Jack..."

...

After dinner, Klein put on his coat and hat in preparation to head out.

He was going to find Miss Sharron, resolve the problem of the baronet digging up a tunnel, and ask for clues about mermaids. He wanted to complete these matters before Detective Sherlock

Moriarty headed south for a "vacation."

Chapter 456: Playing Ghosts

Outside the Bravehearts Bar, a rental carriage briskly drove by.

Inside the carriage, Klein, who was wearing a half top hat, was sitting opposite Sharron, who was still wearing her black Gothic regal dress.

Looking at the expressionless and pale face of his former bodyguard, Klein was at a loss on how to exchange pleasantries. He could only go straight to the point.

"I'm done with my preparations."

Although Sequence 6 Faceless had only given him one Beyonder ability, all the powers he had before had experienced a clear upgrade, resulting in a great improvement to his strength. This was the best form of preparation.

However, a Faceless's powers could be deemed a godly skill in certain situations!

For example, when being pursued or trying to infiltrate... Klein couldn't help but let his imagination run wild.

Sharron listened quietly and simply said, "Tonight?"

She spoke with a slight rise in intonation towards the end to indicate an inquiry.

"If it's fine with you, then I'm fine as well," Klein responded, prepared.

"Alright." Sharron nodded.

After a few seconds of silence, Klein asked in deliberation, "Have you heard about anything to do with mermaids? Do you know where one can meet such a creature of legends?"

Sharron's blue eyes stared unblinkingly at Klein, as though she had transformed into a real doll.

After a while, she emotionlessly said, "There are no longer mermaids in places where humans can reach.

“Only the fishermen of the Gargas Islands would occasionally hear the mermaids singing in the midst of a storm during their long voyages to hunt white-tailed whales.”

Located in the depths of the Sonia Sea, the Gargas Islands was the farthest human colony in the sea, characterized by local products such as whale oil and whale meat.

I wonder if this rumor is true or fake... Klein nodded.

“I understand.”

...

The bell chimes in the night rang out quietly, as though they came from a far away place.

There was an abandoned chapel in the middle of Williams Street. Withered vines crawled over its walls and gray stones were strewn everywhere.

Inside the chapel, feces and debris intertwined amidst the rocks and dead grass.

In the half-collapsed corner, a middle-aged man, wearing black tights, was moving stones that hid the entrance to a cave. He carefully and excitedly went into the tunnel, carrying his digging tools, lighting tools, and earth basket.

His hair was gray at the temples, and his eyes were puffy. He was Baronet Rafter Pound, who was considered mentally ill by the outside world, but he was secretly a descendant of the Tudor family of the Fourth Epoch.

This prodigy, who was always entangled with high-class callgirls, had a serious expression on his face, and his eyes were bright. It was impossible to find any signs of him being addicted to drinking and sex.

He pushed himself up on his elbows and rapidly crawled down the slope, as though the end of the tunnel hid the greatest and only hope of his life.

Not long after, he touched the wet mud and cold stone in front of him.

This didn't extinguish Rafter Pound's enthusiasm, he repeated motions that he was extremely proficient with after having recently gained the experience.

As he was digging, carrying, and moving things, an empty area appeared before him. It was a dark underground palace that was in front of him.

Rafter Pound's expression immediately became crazed with excitement. He quickly moved forward and grabbed the black iron badge.

The badge was a hand holding a scepter. Seeing this, Rafter Pound's eyes lit up as if they were on fire.

Just as he put the black iron badge on his chest, everything in front of him shattered. He was still in the narrow and irregular tunnel, with wet mud and ice-cold stones in front of him.

No, there was someone else there who was quietly "watching" him.

He had no eyes, no nose, no mouth, no eyebrows, and no ears!

Rafter Pound's pupils contracted. He could only feel a numbness rising along his spine from his waist down to the back of his head.

Without even thinking about it, he immediately threw away all his tools and frantically retreated.

His elbows smacked the ground, but he felt no pain despite having a mangled wound.

Finally, Rafter Pound left the tunnel and returned to the abandoned chapel.

Because of the loss of his lantern, he could only see the deep darkness and the dim "crimson" that shrouded the edges.

Suddenly, the withered vines that were crawling up the wall swayed like snakes. A figure walked out from the darkness.

She was wearing a Gothic regal dress and a black small soft hat, with a pale face to the point of being transparent, as well as pale blonde hair and blue eyes that didn't look human.

Rafter Pound almost shouted out loud. For such a woman to appear in an environment such as this was no different from a ghost story from folklore!

Tap! Tap! Tap!

He took a few steps back and almost tripped over a rock.

At that moment, he seemed to think of something, and he suppressed his horror in an instant, revealing an excited and hopeful expression.

"A-are you that evil spirit inside the underground palace?

"Yes, it must be you!"

Sir Pound, there seems to be a misunderstanding... Faceless Klein came out of the tunnel and stood in the shadows.

His and Sharron's original plan had been to scare Rafter Pound off, scaring him so badly that he would no longer dare to explore the underground ruins again. However, Rafter Pound's reaction was somewhat out of their expectations.

Sharron was silent for a second before tacitly asking, "What do you wish to say?"

Rafter Pound quietly exhaled, and he then curled his lips into a smile.

"After attempting for so many years, I believe you already understand that killing the descendants of the Tudor family won't help you break the seal.

"Only by working with me, who has the great Tudor Bloodline, can you hope to get out of this predicament that has lasted for more than two thousand years."

The Tudors knew about the existence of the evil spirit, but they still died in that room... Klein frowned as spoke before Sharron could. He imitated Sharron's ethereal voice.

"What took you until today to come here?"

This was a branch of the Faceless's Beyonder powers—to mimic the sound of a target. He could reproduce any voice as long as he heard it before!

Of course, Klein believed he couldn't repeat the ravings of the True Creator and the pleas of Mr. Door. This Beyonder power was still limited to the realm of ordinary people.

Sharron looked sideways at him but didn't expose him.

Rafter Pound didn't notice and chuckled.

"It's because the Black Emperor has appeared.

"Fate tells me that the glory of the Blood Emperor will appear once again!"

Is there some logical connection? Klein had an inexplicable feeling that Rafter Pound was more like a madman than before.

He asked in Sharron's voice again, "Black Emperor?"

"Haha." Rafter Pound laughed, "Yes, Hero Bandit Black Emperor. He must be closely related to the real Black Emperor!" *Why don't I know that?* Klein felt amused.

He thought for a moment, then he stopped asking, giving up the right to ask questions.

Sharron, for some reason, remained silent.

Upon seeing this, Rafter Pound was overjoyed as he quickly asked, "So, what's your answer?"

"I refuse," Sharron replied emotionlessly.

Rafter suppressed his anxiety and tried to persuade her again.

At this moment, his eyes suddenly glazed over as he abruptly took a few steps to the side, arriving at a relatively intact stone wall.

This... Klein and Sharron noticed an abnormality at the same time. They responded in their own ways, one pulling out a revolver and pointing it at Rafter Pound, the other filling the ruined chapel with a crimson lunar brilliance.

Rafter Pound didn't even look at them. He faced the stone wall and slammed his head into it.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

He slammed his head three times in a row and fainted with blood dripping from his forehead.

Then he got up again, his eyes were bloodshot for some unknown reason.

Rafter Pound raised his right hand and wiped the blood from his forehead, covering his palm with blood.

He stuck out the tip of his tongue, licked the scarlet liquid, and said in an intoxicated manner, “A member of the Tudor bloodline sure is delicious; it’s really intoxicating.

“It will allow my loathing to exceed its limits to the greatest extent, and it will help me temporarily expand the boundary of the seal.”

Klein’s muzzle was aimed at him as he asked in a stunned tone, “The evil spirit in the ruins?”

Blood trickled across Rafter Pound’s face, and he laughed horribly.

“You guessed right.

“Before, I judged that you were weak and wanted to corrupt your mind and enter your dreams to tempt you into rescuing me. Who knows, heh heh, you’re also a person with a secret.”

Don’t be so direct... Klein subconsciously glanced at Sharron, but he found nothing out of the ordinary about her.

“What do you want to do?” Klein asked directly.

The evil spirit sighed.

“I’m an innocent person who was harmed because of Alista Tudor’s ambition. Due to the constraints of my corpse, I’ve been trapped in that underground ruin for nearly two thousand years.

“I hope that you can help me out of this predicament and allow me to become a free spirit. I swear, I won’t involve innocent people.”

After saying that, he looked at Sharron with his bloodshot eyes.

“You should be a Wraith from the Mutant pathway. The next stop is a critical point to becoming a demigod. I’m not sure if you have the

Puppet potion formula, but I can help you obtain it. I can even be a part of your ritual. That is the reward I can promise you."

Puppet, Sequence 4 of the Mutant pathway is called Puppet? What a strange name... Klein muttered inwardly.

The evil spirit turned to look at him.

"You will similarly be rewarded.

"It's an object that can be considered mystical and precious, and because of some sort of attraction, its holder came to the underground palace and died by the side of the Tudor descendants.

"This is what it looks like."

As he spoke, the evil spirit spread open the palm of his hand, causing the crimson moonlight to form a scene.

Inside the picture, there was a normal looking tarot card. The image on it was completely different from the others. Sitting inside a chariot wasn't a king, but rather a male priest wearing a dark red robe.

The priest looked like Roselle Gustav!

This... A Card of Blasphemy! Klein's eyes instantly shifted. He saw that the starlight in the upper left corner had condensed into a line of text: "Sequence 0: Red Priest!"

Sequence 0, Red Priest... Which pathway's Sequence 0 is this?

I've learned the true name of another Sequence 0... Of course, the pretext is that the evil spirit isn't lying...

It said that the holder of the Red Priest card would seek out the underground ruins of the Tudor family due to some form of attraction, but they ended up dying in that room... This should be the law of convergence of Beyonder characteristics within the same pathway, right? No, Emperor Roselle had apparently mentioned that after advancing to become a High-Sequence Beyonder, possessing a corresponding Card of Blasphemy would allow them to subtly sense the Beyonder ingredients needed for subsequent Sequences... In other words, the room where the evil spirit is sealed has a demigod-ranked characteristic of the Red Priest pathway hidden within... Perhaps, the evil spirit was a demigod of this pathway when it was still alive, and it might even be a little stronger...

Hmm... The subtle sensation provided by the Card of Blasphemy is probably a result of the law of convergence...

Klein suddenly thought of many things. He subconsciously turned his head to look at Sharron to see her reaction. By doing so, he could determine if she knew about the Card of Blasphemy and whether she understood the meaning of a Sequence 0.

However, there was no change in Sharron's nearly transparent face. It was as if the evil spirit had just shown an ordinary tarot card.

However, this actually implies something. When any Beyonder first comes to learn of a Sequence 0, they will subconsciously think about what it represented... Perhaps only a Beyonder in the Spectator pathway can read the subtle body language of Miss Sharron... Klein sighed to himself.

Seeing that both of them were silent at the same time, the evil spirit gave Klein a deep glance, slowly making the projection of the Card of Blasphemy disappear.

It once again looked at Sharron with its bloodshot eyes and said with a low and hoarse laugh, “If you are unwilling to become a demigod of the Mutant pathway, then I can provide you with the Sequence 4 potion formula of the Abyss pathway. The temperance of desire and the flamboyance of malice has always been very congruous, isn’t it?”

Sharron ignored the evil spirit’s question and turned unhurriedly to Klein, leaving him to respond.

What the evil spirit means is that the Mutant pathway and the Abyss pathway are closely related pathways which are exchangeable at high Sequences... How the Rose School of Thought and the Blood Sanctify Sect act on the surface does seem very similar... Klein thought for two seconds and looked at the bloodied Rafter Pound.

“Then, how can your seal be removed?”

The evil spirit laughed and said, “Very simple. Find a direct descendant of the Sauron, Einhorn, and Medici family and obtain 10 milliliters of their blood, each. A little more is fine, but not less.

“Then mix them with holy water and pour them into my room. “This way, the seal will be lifted.”

It’s a very simple and strange method. Even in the field of mysticism, it’s rare... Why must they be direct descendants of the Sauron, Einhorn, and Medici families? I have never heard of the last one. Sauron is the former royal family of Intis, and Einhorn is the royal family of the Feysac Empire. Both of them were loyal to the Trunsoest Empire, the Angel Family of the Fourth Epoch, and they were the final winners. However, Loen’s Augustus and Feynapotter’s Castiya families also meet the same conditions... Oh right, the Sauron and Einhorn family have one more thing in common, and that is their possession of the Hunter pathway!

Is this the reason for them being chosen? Eh... Taking the situation from before into context, the Hunter pathway is equal to the Red Priest pathway?

As he made a guess, Klein didn’t conceal his doubts.

“I know about the Sauron and Einhorn families, but I’ve never heard of the Medici family.”

“Very normal. They often enjoy hiding in the shadows. They are corrupted angels and have established an extremely secretive organization,” the evil spirit said with a contemptuous tone. “That organization is known as Rose Redemption.”

This name is very familiar... That’s right, inside the abandoned temple of the True Creator that was recently found by the City of Silver, there is something similar written on a corner of a mural. They suspect that it’s the name of the city or the creator of the temple... Now, from the looks of it, this symbolizes an extremely secretive organization that was founded by corrupted angels... They believe in the True Creator? What is their relationship with the Aurora Order? Klein pondered for a moment and said, “It’s related to the True Creator?”

The evil spirit was silent for two seconds before asking in a low voice, “You know about Rose Redemption?”

“I heard it by chance,” Klein spoke the absolute truth.

The evil spirit thought for a moment, then it suddenly said with a smile, “You have more secrets than I thought.”

Can we not talk about such things? Klein held himself back from watching Sharron’s response as he wore an unperturbed look.

The evil spirit’s gaze swept across the two and laughed.

“Rose Redemption has a close relationship with the birth of the True Creator. It’s impossible for you to imagine that certain people were once members of Rose Redemption, but they have since left it.

“As long as you find an organization that believes in the True Creator and trace it to the very end, then there will be a chance of you coming into contact with Rose Redemption.”

It sounds a little like the Twilight Hermit Order, with one being the front side while the other the is back side... Klein made an intuitive guess.

Seeing that the evil spirit had no intention of giving an in-depth introduction to Rose Redemption, he laughed and said, “Do you think we can complete something like that with our strengths?”

The evil spirit was silent for a few seconds before saying, “Maybe you guys can try your luck in Binsy Town.”

“Binsy Town? Where’s that?” Despite Klein’s repeated questioning, the evil spirit refused to reveal anything else.

Faced with this situation, Klein could only switch to asking, “During the Fourth Epoch, were the Black Emperor, Blood

Emperor, and Night Emperor fighting for the position of Sequence 0?”

When the evil spirit heard this, it was stunned for a moment before it smiled and said, “It was once was the case, but not later. It wasn’t the case after Alista Tudor went mad.”

“Alista Tudor was that Blood Emperor?” Klein sought confirmation.

The evil spirit nodded.

“Yes, there has only been one Blood Emperor, that lunatic, Alista Tudor. Heh heh. The descendants of the Tudor family have all inherited the madness of that bloodline. They’re usually crafty, devious, careful, and cautious, but at critical moments, they can become reckless and not consider the repercussions.” The evil spirit pointed at Rafter Pound’s face and said, “He is an example. However, after this lesson, he will definitely become more normal for a long period of time... I’ve no idea if he’s the last Tudor. Alista left quite a number of good things which require the blood of his descendants in order to gain access to them. It’s best that you don’t kill him now.”

The evil spirit paused and chuckled softly.

“Alright, after you help me remove the seal, I will tell you all the stories I have experienced—No, a more accurate description is the history I’ve experienced.”

Having said that, Rafter Pound’s eyes suddenly lost focus.

His body twitched a few times before limply collapsing to the ground.

Sharron silently watched this scene before she suddenly took a step forward.

Whoosh!

The wind howled as the dirt and rocks on the ground began to move before falling into the underground tunnel and sealing off the entrance.

After that was done, Klein and Sharron left Williams Street and took a detour to another block in the silent darkness.

When Klein boarded the rental carriage, Sharron's figure appeared, and she sat across from him.

She looked unblinkingly at Klein as she asked with her hoarse and ethereal voice, "Will you help it lift its seal?"

"No." Klein didn't hesitate to reply, and then he asked, "What about you?"

Sharron shook her head, indicating that she wouldn't either.

Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he smiled.

"It's already been dead for about two thousand years, and right now, it's just a remnant of an evil spirit. Dispersing or returning to the spirit world is supposed to be its end. My plan is that once we become High-Sequence Beyonders, we can team up and

eliminate it, giving it true deliverance."

Although the Red Priest card, the hidden history of the Fourth Epoch, and the evil spirit's promised rewards were tempting, Klein had no confidence in it at all.

In his mind, he would always recall the scene of the evil spirit's corpse sitting on a high back chair with its head lowered. He would also remember how the other party's face would be covered in traces of decay when he raised his head.

Sharron tersely acknowledged, giving the necessary response.

Aren't you supposed to ask me why I'm so confident in becoming a High-Sequence Beyonder? Klein couldn't help but lampoon.

And the answer to that question was that people needed to have dreams.

Klein no longer bothered with the topic and switched to asking, “Is the Wraith’s corresponding Sequence 4 really Puppet?” Sharron nodded.

“Do you have the potion formula or Beyonder ingredients?” Klein asked in thought.

Sharron shook her head.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

“I’ll help you keep an eye out for it in my circle.”

Sharron said without changing her tone, “Thank you.”

Klein looked out of the window and muttered to himself, “I’m going to the south for a holiday.”

At this point, he said with a smile, as if he were speaking to a Lawyer Jurgen, “Let me wish you and Maric a happy new year in advance.”

Sharron was silent for two seconds, then she pursed her lips and replied in a fleeting voice, “Happy New Year.”

Her figure gradually faded and disappeared from the carriage...

...

Looking at the little boy behind the altar and hearing his slightly hoarse and tender voice, Derrick felt as if he was facing the most terrifying monster. He almost performed a downward cleave with the Axe of Hurricane in his hand.

From what he knew, a person who could survive in the pure darkness for so long was definitely not human. Even if he was one before, it definitely wouldn’t be one after that long!

Demon Hunter Colin’s eyes seemed to brighten a little. He tightened his grip on his sword and asked in a calm voice, “What are you doing here?”

The yellow-haired boy who called himself Jack had a pained expression as he replied, “We’re looking for the holy residence of the Lord.”

“The holy residence of the Lord?” Colin pressed.

“Right.” The little boy Jack turned his head and looked at the pitch-black cross and the statue of the overturned man. “They told me that as long as I go in the direction that the Lord’s eyes look in, then I will be able to reach his holy residence.”

“They? You still have companions?” Colin’s eyes moved one full revolution as if he were a monster, taking in the surroundings. “Where are they?”

Hearing this question, the little boy Jack was stunned for a moment.

Suddenly, he held his throat, and with a twisted, blank look on his face, he said, “I’m so hungry...

“So hungry...”

"So hungry..."

Amidst his trancelike words, Jack raised his head and looked at Joshua, who was wearing a pair of scarlet red gloves.

"So hungry..."

His mouth opened in an instant, reaching straight to his ears, revealing his neat white teeth and thick saliva that was constantly gushing out of his mouth.

At the same time, he threw himself forward towards Joshua. He was so fast that he left behind an afterimage on the ground.

Although Joshua was on high alert, he wasn't able to react in time.

Before he could even make out what was happening, the little boy, Jack, had already pounced in front of him.

Thump!

The yellow-haired figure seemed to slam into an invisible wall, stopping only a step away from Joshua.

Jack suspended himself in midair as a reddish glow from the darkness emerged from his body and started to corrode the transparent barrier that was denying him entry.

Behind Joshua and Derrick, Demon Hunter Colin had already fallen to one knee at some point. He had stabbed his sword, smeared with a silver ointment, into the ground.

Soon after, the area around the altar instantly brightened, as if it was the purest ray of the light of dawn.

Colin suddenly drew his sword, and his figure strangely split apart, turning into a series of afterimages that spread out around the altar.

Every single figure raised the sword in their hands at the same time and, combined with the light of dawn in the vicinity, released a bright glow.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

One sword after another was thrust forward as the light of dawn converged towards Jack from all directions, encircling him in the middle.

Under the brilliance of the rising sun, the black and red figures quickly evaporated, disappearing under the storm-like barrage of attacks.

In the underground hall where the altar was located, the brilliance became abnormally bright, so bright that Derrick Berg couldn't help but close his eyes.

With a sudden jolt, he suddenly woke up from his slumber and saw a bonfire quietly burning in front of him and his teammates, who were diligently guarding the camp.

Demon Hunter Colin, who was sitting cross-legged beside a stone pillar, opened his eyes and said in a deep voice, "We will set off after 50 rounds of lightning."

Upon hearing this, Derrick looked up at the sky and found that the frequency of lightning hadn't significantly increased. Darkness remained the ruler of this land.

When he thought of the city he was about to arrive at and the temple of the Fallen Creator, he couldn't help but feel slightly nervous.

After spending some time calming himself down, Derrick quickly ate his food and recovered his combat-ready state.

I wonder what will happen in that temple... Holding the Axe of Hurricane, he came to the middle of the group.

Within the campsite, lanterns that were covered with a thin layer of animal hide were being lit one after another.

...

15 Minsk Street.

Klein heated the water, adjusted the temperature, and took a comfortable bath.

With the languidness after a bath, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. He intended to use divination to make a confirmation about the evil spirit's matter.

In the silence of the ancient palace, Klein leaned back in his chair and began to seriously consider which divination method to choose and how to design the divination statement. It had to conform to the principles of mysticism, it shouldn't involve subdivision or elimination, and it had to contain sufficient information.

After a short period of silence, Klein leaned forward and wrote down what he wanted to confirm: "The evil spirit in the ruins harbors strong malice towards Sharron and me."

He undid the spirit pendulum on his left wrist, gripped it with one hand, and began entering Cogitation.

After muttering to himself for a while, he opened his eyes and looked forward.

This time, the topaz pendant was wildly rotating clockwise!

This meant that the evil spirit's malice was stronger than Klein had imagined!

At that time, there was nothing abnormal about the spiritual intuition we had... That evil spirit is also a powerhouse that's good at interfering with divination and prophecy... Heh heh, he definitely wouldn't have imagined that one of us has the temperance to resist desire, preventing her from being blinded by greed, while the other has experienced too many things to know what it means to "ask a tiger for its skin"... With a sigh, Klein returned to the real world and laid down on his bed.

Unfortunately, the heat brought by the Sun Brooch is only a psychological feeling and can't warm the bed... Before he fell asleep, he closed his eyes and thought with regret.

...

South of the Bridge, Rose Street, Harvest Church.

After Emlyn White wiped the last chair, he straightened up and eagerly said to Father Utravsky, "I've finished doing today's chores!"

Damn old man, don't you suddenly get ideas of getting me to copy the Holy Bible! Emlyn prayed inwardly.

The object of his prayer had unwittingly changed from the moon to Earth Mother.

Father Utravsky stood there, making the vampire look like a child.

He smiled and said, "Recently, you've been able to experience the joy and relaxation of working with dedication and gratitude. Go back and quietly feel the pulse of life and the pure joy that comes from it."

"I haven't!" Emlyn denied on reflex.

Without saying anything, Father Utravsky looked at him with a kind smile, turned and took a seat, and then began his nightly prayer.

Emlyn White's lips quivered as he wanted to refute, but in the end, he failed to say anything. He silently left the Harvest Church and habitually closed the door.

When he returned to his current residence, he found that the house was empty. Both his parents had disappeared without a trace.

It was only after witnessing this scene that he remembered that there was going to be a Sanguine gathering in the Backlund area tonight.

"Those fellows are really disgraceful. As noble Sanguine, they should sleep in coffins or stay in their own rooms. Why are they mimicking humans and holding all kinds of gatherings? There's even dancing!" Emlyn muttered contemptuously.

As he spoke, he touched his belly and swallowed a mouthful of saliva before deciding to change into some clothes to attend the gathering.

"The Odora family sure is enviable. They actually have a pure human partner who runs several hospitals and has fresh blood every day. They can drink as much as they want, anytime they want." Emlyn put on his black top hat and quickly walked out of the house.

West Borough, in a brightly lit villa.

Emlyn picked up a glass with scarlet liquid and hungrily took a gulp of it.

It really has been pre-selected... He half closed his eyes, sighing in praise from the bottom of his heart.

At this moment, on the dance floor, handsome men and beautiful women were dancing, twirling and taking slow steps with each other under the romantic music.

"What's the point of all of this?" Emlyn stood at the edge of the railing on the second floor, looking down at his kinsmen.

As the largest city in the world, Backlund had many vampires living in it. They hid in all walks of life and had completely integrated into human society.

As for those who were unable to control their own destructive urges and bloodlust, they were either sent to castles deep in the mountains or were dealt with in advance to prevent the Nighthawks or other official Beyonder organizations from finding clues.

As he looked at his fellow kinsmen, who were growing more spirited as the night went on, Emlyn increasingly felt like there was nothing in common between him and them.

At that moment, the host of the banquet tonight, Cosmi Odora walked over with a wine cup in hand. Smiling, he asked, "Do you like tonight's 'wine?'"

"Of course, its owner is young enough and possesses great vitality." Emlyn straightened his back and assumed a noble posture.

Based on appearances, Cosmi Odora was a very gracious middleaged gentleman, but Emlyn knew that he was over two hundred years old. He had once seen Intis under the rule of Emperor Roselle, and then he moved to Loen because he had "lived" for too long and feared that his neighbors would discover something was wrong about him.

Upon hearing Emlyn's praise, he smiled and said, "Yes, its owner is a young lady who was stabbed by a thief and nearly lost her life. Fortunately, she met me, and this is the price she needs to pay for her recovery.

"You can have a taste of the wine over there, as well as the wine over there. The owners are from Balam and Feynapotter

respectively. They have different flavors."

"Feynapotter? Mother Goddess, the humans there love chili so much that their blood has a spiciness that I can't stand. Mother Goddess..." As he spoke, Emlyn suddenly paused, his expression instantly turning blank.

The corner of Cosmi's mouth twitched, and he pretended not to hear anything.

In the awkward silence, he cleared his throat and said, "Emlyn, that's just your imagination. By the way, my grandfather wishes to meet you."

"Your grandfather?" Emlyn was startled for a moment, but he then immediately widened his eyes. "Lord Nibbs?"

Nibbs Odora was a powerful Sanguine who had been active in the Fourth Epoch, but the times had corroded his life and forced him to lie in a cold coffin for extended periods of time.

Cosmi nodded solemnly.

"Yes."

With that, he turned and walked to another staircase on the second floor, not considering the possibility that Emlyn might refuse him.

Emlyn followed, a little nervous and uneasy, thinking about the purpose of Lord Nibbs's summons.

Has he finally understood that the honor of the Sanguine is more important and has decided to help me get rid of Father Utravsky's psychological cue? As he walked, Emlyn White developed a strong sense of hope.

Following the stairs to the underground area, Emlyn White passed through a few secret doors and entered a large gray hall.

In the center of the hall was a heavy coffin made of black iron, engraved with symbols and magic labels.

After Cosmi Odora reported Emlyn's arrival, a heavy and aged voice slowly came out from the coffin.

“Emlyn White, do you know why I summoned you?”

“Honorable Lord Nibbs, I imagine that you are planning on helping me remove the psychological cue,” Emlyn responded without hesitation.

Silence reigned in the underground hall for a few seconds. Then, Nibbs Odora, who was lying in the coffin, chuckled and said, “That’s one of the purposes, but it won’t be me helping you.

“I just woke up from a long dream because I received a revelation from the Ancestor.”

“Ancestor? ‘Sh-She’ has awakened?” It wasn’t Emlyn who exclaimed in surprise, but Cosmi Odora.

After the Cataclysm, doesn’t the Ancestor only respond to important matters? Emlyn listened in bewilderment.

“No, not yet,” Nibbs said in a heavy voice. “The Ancestor told me that the apocalypse is near and that we must prepare for it, and you, Emlyn White, are one of the key elements in the Ancestor’s revelation.”

“Apocalypse?” Cosmi asked in surprise.

But Emlyn only had one thought.

I, Emlyn White, was actually mentioned by the Ancestor! I am a key element for the Sanguine’s survival of the apocalypse!

Nibbs ignored his grandson’s question and continued, “Emlyn White, I’ll hand you a task right now.”

“Please speak.” Emlyn felt that he was being too modest. Even after hearing what had just been said, he didn’t show any arrogance in front of Lord Nibbs.

Nibbs Odora solemnly said, “Find a chance to pray to The Fool.” “Ah?” Emlyn suspected he had heard wrongly.

Nibbs lowered his voice and added, “The Fool whose honorific name has only recently been spread.”

Chapter 459: Letting A Chance Slip

Although I have always had the urge to pray to The Fool to get rid of the psychological cue that Father Utravsky gave me, I also know, very clearly, that it's dangerous to recite the honorific name of an unknown being. Not all hidden existences will start with bait and slowly provide guidance. In such matters, "They" are often like sharks in the sea, who would go mad and lurch forward once they smell blood...

But now... Lord Nibbs, no—what does the Ancestor want?

Emlyn White said, finding it rather ridiculous, "It will be very, very, very dangerous."

Inside the black iron coffin, Nibbs Odora replied with an aged voice, "Yes, under normal circumstances.

"But not all hidden existences are filled with malice. Among 'Them,' they will similarly abide to rules and enjoy transactions. For example, the seven pure lights of the spirit world.

"Since the Ancestor has given such a revelation, it means that the danger that The Fool can bring is not too serious, or even none.

"And during this entire process, I will always be by your side to protect you.

"Don't you want to get rid of the psychological cue? Have you already become a believer of Earth Mother and abandoned the moon?"

"No, I haven't!" Emlyn frantically denied.

After a moment of silence, he gritted his teeth and said, "I wish to have a few days to think it over."

"Alright, no problem. I believe that you will make a choice that suits your noble identity as a member of the Sanguine." Inside the coffin, Nibbs's voice turned soft as he smiled and comforted him.

After sending Emlyn White back to the second floor, Cosmi Odora once again returned to the dark and gloomy underground hall, and he asked with confusion and doubt, "Grandfather, how could the revelation given by the Ancestor involve Emlyn White? He's just a weak member of the Sanguine who only recently reached adulthood."

Nibbs's voice came through the thick black metal coffin lid and reverberated in the air.

"No, the revelation provided by the Ancestor never included Emlyn White.

"'She' only showed a scene of the dawn of the apocalypse, depicting the erosion of the crimson moon, as well as mentioning The Fool and the corresponding honorific name.

"During this process, no Sanguine appeared. The mention of the key element was just my way of convincing Emlyn White.

"However, being able to take risks for the future of the Sanguine can also be considered a key element."

Cosmi was first enlightened before he had another question.

"Why did you choose Emlyn White? What's so special about him?"

Nibbs Odora suddenly laughed.

"Hasn't he been clamoring about praying to The Fool all this time? Didn't he think that we weren't putting too much weight on his problem, that we aren't willing to antagonize Bishop Utravsky, so he was trying to find other help?

"I'm just fulfilling his wish."

For a long time, Cosmi was speechless.

Emlyn White stood at the railing of the second floor, looked down at his tireless kinsmen, and nervously took a sip of his "wine."

Up to this day, I haven't heard of any terrible outcome for people who prayed to The Fool... Perhaps it's just as Lord Nibbs said, The Fool is just like the seven pure lights in the spirit world, a hidden existence that maintains order and is warm-hearted... Wait a minute, what are the seven pure lights in the spirit world? Why haven't I ever heard of them before? They seem to be on the side of good? I wonder if this will be any help to me... In short, The Fool isn't necessarily dangerous, and there is Lord Nibbs protecting me... Maybe I can take advantage of this opportunity to get rid of the psychological cue... Emlyn consoled himself with fear and anticipation.

...

Monday morning. Cherwood Borough, 15 Minsk Street.

Klein squatted in front of the toilet, holding a brush and carefully cleaning the dirt inside it.

According to his schedule, after completing his "visits" on Saturday and Sunday, he decided to take a day off and wait until tomorrow to report back to Prince Edessak about the final results and hand over the assignment. But during what should've been his relaxation time, he found the house a little too messy and dirty.

It was only when he saw this that he remembered that the cleaning of the house had been done twice a week through the temporary employment of the landlady's maid next door.

As the Sammers had gone on holiday to Seville City in Desi Bay, one of the maids had gone along with them, while another had returned to the countryside after receiving a year-end bonus. 15 Minsk Street, where he lived, hadn't been cleaned by anyone for quite some time.

Klein had planned to put up with it for two days since he was "leaving" Backlund, but in his free time, he didn't dare to take the time to head to the Quelaag Club to have fun. He was afraid of infuriating Prince Edessak, so he could only stay home. Hence, seeing the things that irked him, he changed into his old clothes and began spring cleaning before the new year.

He went on to scrub the toilet, wash the bathtub, wipe the windows, mop the floors, clean his equipment, and wash clothes... Klein busied himself from eight to eleven before barely completing his desired cleanup.

Of course, he only did it perfunctorily without that much attention to detail.

Sometimes, renting too big a house isn't a good thing... Klein washed his hands and wiped his face with a towel.

Walking out of the bathroom and looking at the clean and tidy living room and dining room, and watching the sunlight pierce through the clouds and shine through the transparent glass window, showering

golden spots in his house, he had a strange sense of accomplishment. He felt a lot happier.

Time to reward myself for lunch. I'll find a good restaurant... Klein returned to the second floor and changed his clothes.

As he leafed through the papers, waiting for lunchtime, the doorbell rang.

"It's almost the new year, and there are still people coming to entrust me with missions?" As he rose and walked to the door, Klein made up his mind to decline.

Although he only had 34 pounds left in cash, in order to get out of the royal strife, he had to "go on vacation" to the south as soon as possible. He could no longer accept assignments.

To his surprise, the visitor wasn't a stranger, but the old butler of Prince Edessak.

The old butler was wearing a well-cut tuxedo. He saluted without losing his dignity, and said, "Detective Moriarty, His Highness, the Prince, is waiting for you in the carriage at the end of the street. He wishes to know the progress of your investigations."

So impatient? Alright, that saves me the trouble of going all the way to Red Rose Manor tomorrow... Klein quickly reorganized what he had thought of last night and calmly replied, "Alright."

He was about to remove his hat from the coat rack when he felt a sudden ache in his stomach, a pain that required him to visit the toilet.

After enduring for a while, he realized that he couldn't hold it in any longer and apologetically said to the old butler, "I'm very sorry. I'll need to use the bathroom first. My stomach isn't feeling well."

The old butler didn't show any abnormal expression.

"That's your freedom."

As he discharged one wave after another of bliss, clearing away the remnants in his stomach, Klein washed his hands and returned to the hall.

At that moment, he noticed that the old butler was no longer around. The one waiting outside was the maid with curly brown hair.

“His Highness requested me to apologize to you; he still has matters to attend to and cannot wait for too long. Please go to Red Rose Manor tomorrow or the afternoon of the day after tomorrow.” The maid bowed meticulously.

It hasn’t even been ten minutes, and I’d already done it as fast as I could... Usually, I can continue on for quite a while if I have newspapers... Klein smiled.

“No problem.”

After receiving a response, the maid who had completed her mission immediately felt a weight off her chest. She giggled and said, “Detective Moriarty, you missed that lady again.” “Huh?” Klein was at a loss.

The maid lowered her voice and said, “This time, the young lady came with His Highness. She was the one who suggested taking a detour to meet you.”

In the end, I missed her because of my stomachache? Something isn’t right... Klein frowned slightly.

...

In a room padded with a thick and soft carpet.

A quill that was being held came to a pause and stopped writing.

In the open notebook beneath it, there were lines of text and marks of scribbled out text:

(Scribbles)

“Target attempted to escape control, but unfortunately, Detective Sherlock Moriarty leaves before she heads downstairs.”

...

“The target influenced the surrounding maids, but Prince Edessak’s butler, Funkel, chanced upon the problem and dealt with it.”

...

(Scribbles)

"The target went off track once again. She participated in Talim's funeral on behalf of Prince Edessak. However, having quickly recovered to her normal state, she realized that she was unable to identify Sherlock Moriarty, and she could only let a chance slip."

...

"Sherlock Moriarty went to Red Rose Manor to investigate, but the timing wasn't right, and the target happened to be riding horses on the golf course."

...

(Scribbles)

"The target, once again, triumphed over the arrangement, encouraging Prince Edessak to visit Detective Sherlock Moriarty. Unfortunately, Sherlock Moriarty happened to have a stomachache, ended up staying in the bathroom for seven minutes and forty-five seconds, and the Prince couldn't afford to wait."

...

His facial features were like a sculpture, but the middle-aged man who was blinded in one eye put down his quill and looked at a woman.

"What exactly did you put on her body? Breaking through the restrictions time and time again will create big problems."

The woman laughed in a low voice and said, "It was just an accident. Don't worry, there won't be any problems."

As she spoke, she pulled back her hair, revealing her long, white neck.

After that, she slowly applied various things to her face, making her look even more alluring.

Seeing that she was putting on her clothes and accessories, the dark golden-haired middle-aged man frowned and asked, "Where are you going?"

The woman didn't directly answer and said with a smile, "Be careful of the quill in your hand, you almost exchanged bodies with someone the last time."

"You don't need to remind me," the middle-aged man with deep blue eyes to the point of being black said with a straight face.

The woman tightened her belt to make herself look thinner, then she lazily stretched and yawned while covering her mouth. "I'm going to pay a visit to Mr. A of the Aurora Order.

"I hope he's as crazy as the rumors say."

As she spoke, the expression of the blind middle-aged man suddenly sank. It was because that ordinary quill had begun to write on its own, as though an invisible hand was holding onto it.

Chapter 460: Cyclic Explorations

Above the gray fog, the ancient temple-like building stood quietly.

After noticing some abnormalities in the series of coincidences, Klein entered the mysterious space after lunch, in an attempt to confirm a guess in his mind.

He picked up a fountain pen he conjured, paused for two seconds, and then wrote: "I am involved in a series of coincidences created by Sealed Artifact 0-08."

Putting down the dark red pen, Klein held the silver chain in his left hand and began his divination.

Finally, he opened his eyes and looked at the spirit pendulum just inches away from him.

The topaz pendant stood still without any rotations.

This meant that the divination had failed!

Divination cannot be completed—possibly due to not fulfilling sufficient conditions, or it could be because 0-08 is resisting it... In both cases, a similar result would occur... Klein changed his statement and tried to direct it at different targets, but all of them failed.

He tapped the edge of the long mottled table with his finger, hesitating on whether he should go to Red Rose Manor the day after tomorrow.

If there's no 0-08 or a similar power to arrange these matters, then my sudden escape will definitely raise Prince Edessak's suspicion. No, my escape might not be successful. Prince Edessak's men live next door... Of course, since I'm already a Faceless, it's easy for me to find a chance to escape when I'm out, but is there a need to go this far?

Tomorrow afternoon, I'll be able to "leave" Backlund without attracting too much attention by honestly seeking an audience with Prince Edessak and normally handing over the mission. His Highness will likely not force me, an unaffiliated Beyonder, to accomplish too difficult a task...

If there really is a Sealed Artifact or demigod like 0-08 influencing the recent events, then from my past experience, I should just be a side

character who mistakenly entered the stage and haven't received enough attention. In this case, escaping is tantamount to telling the other party that I have detected your presence! I'm highly problematic!

In this way, relying on my Faceless powers wouldn't necessarily allow me to escape the "attention" that has locked onto me...

The best method would be to calmly go to the Red Rose Manor and go through the normal procedures to exit the stage. After graciously bowing from the curtain call, I'll fade away from the "attention" of the unknown party...

After combining the two elements, Klein finally decided to pretend that he hadn't discovered anything and to "leave" Backlund according to plan.

...

The bonfire in the campsite was burning with flames, and there was someone standing guard inside the campsite the entire time.

Derrick Berg leaned against a stone pillar and slept to recover his strength.

At this moment, he was dreaming of the endless grayish-white fog, an ancient chair situated at the highest point in the center, as well as the indifferent figure sitting on that chair, overlooking everything.

Mr. Fool... Derrick said the name in a chanting manner in his mind.

Following that, he heard The Fool's voice: "Prepare for the gathering."

Yes, Mr. Fool. Derrick answered silently and began counting his heartbeats.

His eyes never opened, as if everything that had just happened was just a prelude to a dream.

There's still quite a bit of time before we set off. There's enough time to attend the Tarot Gathering... he thought with relief.

He originally imagined that he, who had joined the exploratory team, would miss this gathering.

After a thousand heartbeats, Derrick waited a little longer before he felt himself entering that quiet and serene divine hall.

The moment he opened his eyes, scenes flashed through his mind. It was as if an external force had instantly injected all his lost memories into his head once again.

The scenes were: crumbling city walls; buildings crisscrossed with white and blue; the temple of the Fallen Creator with a similar architectural style as the City of Silver; murals detailing the approaching apocalypse and the Fallen Creator's protection of the remaining humans from the six great evil gods; the beautiful and dangerous "mushrooms;" and Jack, the eerie pale yellow-haired boy of unknown origins.

These kinds of scenes had repeated over and over again for a total of five times, but each time there was a slight difference in the details.

The first time, outside the Fallen Creator's Temple, all of the animal hide lanterns had been extinguished, nearly causing a tragedy. The second time, someone lost control of themselves and almost swallowed a "mushroom," fortunately, Chief Colin stopped them in time. The third time, the little boy, Jack, told a story, which was that he and his father had been searching for the Creator's holy residence in the endless ocean, and they ended up encountering a huge storm. The fourth time, Joshua was severely injured by Jack who had mutated without any warning. The fifth time, the temple completely collapsed, blocking the exit of the underground area.

And all of these occurrences ended with Demon Hunter Colin killing the little boy, Jack, and then started off with their rest in the camp, preparing to enter the ruined city. The beginning and end were connected as it repeated in a cycle.

We've explored the temple five times... We have been living through this experience all this time, and there is no way to truly end it! The more Derrick understood his sudden new memories, the more frightened and terrified he became.

Audrey, who was sitting on the other side of the long bronze table, originally wanted to greet Mr. Fool and the others with a cheerful and

light voice as usual. However, when she glanced over, she immediately noticed that Little Sun's mood wasn't right. She immediately asked, "Mr. Sun, did something happen? Has the exploration of the True, uh—Fallen Creator's temple not gone smoothly?"

Derrick seemed to have grabbed onto hope as he hurriedly described the rough situation once. When he was done, he said, "After that little boy was dealt with by His Excellency, we all closed our eyes and woke up in the campsite outside the city in preparation to begin a brand new exploration. We no longer had any memories from before.

"This process has been repeated five times, with only the details being slightly different.

"If it wasn't for Mr. Fool's alerting me to this, then I wouldn't have even known that I've been living a recurring life all this time."

He took it for granted that the extra memories from his arrival above the gray fog were the result of Mr. Fool's reminder. He stood up and gave a solemn salute to the blurry figure seated at the head of the long bronze table.

I only understood the situation after listening to your description... Klein was still in a daze.

He maintained his original posture and lightly nodded his head in response.

In a situation where the reasons are unknown, a superior wouldn't so easily express his opinion, so I can't rashly open my mouth... Klein secretly reviewed what he had learned from his past life as a keyboard warrior.

Seeing that Mr. Fool seemed to be an imperturbable ancient wall, Derrick felt a lot more at ease and felt that the matter could finally be resolved.

He turned to look at The Hanged Man, The World, Justice, and The Magician, and he sincerely asked, "Do you know the root of the problem? How can this be resolved?"

The zealous Audrey instinctively wanted to answer, but she found herself without a clue or even a guess.

Fors was in a similar state as she was.

Filled with rich knowledge from Earth and having read many novels of being stuck in the same day, Klein originally wanted to control The World to give out ideas to give everyone some inspiration to consider regarding the matter, but after thinking about it carefully, he chose to stay low-key and prepared to observe first.

After listening to The Sun's description, Alger remained silent for a long time. At this moment, he said in a measured tone, "I can only think of two possibilities. First, you have encountered a Nightmare or hallucinatory power at a level that exceeds a demigod. After regaining your memories with Mr. Fool's help, you should be able to immediately detect something amiss once you return to the real world. That way, the problem will easily be resolved.

"Second, you were forced to or you proactively entered a strange space or state at a particular node where time is controlled to flow in a certain manner, but the time is fixed within a certain range which is cyclical and the continuation is balanced, that is to say, it is relatively static.

"In this situation, there aren't many ways to end the cycle. Either there is an external force that can forcefully break the balance, or you find the key point that connects the distortion of time."

An external force that can forcefully break the balance? Upon hearing this, Audrey, Fors, and Derrick all subconsciously glanced at the calm and leisurely Mr. Fool sitting at the end of the long bronze table.

No, I can't always seek Mr. Fool's help... By not saying anything directly, "He" probably wishes to test my ability at dealing with such matters... After a moment of thought, he said, "Mr. Hanged Man, let's assume the second situation. In your opinion, what do you think is the key point that connects the distortion of time?"

Without waiting for The Hanged Man to respond, Audrey guessed with interest, "That little boy Jack?

"You can't kill him when you're facing him?" Alger nodded.

"That's a possibility."

He hesitated for a moment before saying, “The Sun’s description of Jack and his father reminds me of a particular incident.”

He turned to look at Miss Justice.

“Didn’t I once mention that I was pursuing a Listener of the Aurora Order at sea? The goal for his voyage was to seek the True Creator’s holy residence.”

Audrey carefully recalled and said without any strong confirmation, “That seems to be the case.”

Alger immediately said with a deep voice, “That Listener also brought his son, and the son’s age is very close to The Sun’s description of Jack.”

“Are you saying that Jack went from your world to the vicinity of the City of Silver?” Derrick asked, stunned.

After a short period of settling down, he inwardly felt an indescribable sense of happiness.

This means that the City of Silver hasn’t been completely sealed off yet. There’s still a chance to connect with the normal world where The Hanged Man and Justice are from!

“I can only say that it is possible.” The Hanged Man couldn’t give an affirmative answer.

He thought for a moment and suggested, “You can find a chance to bring up the Sonia Sea, the Loen Kingdom, and the port city in front of Jack. Perhaps there will be a different reaction, but of course, try to avoid doing so in front of the Chief of your City of Silver as much as possible.

“Also, the key point doesn’t necessarily lie with Jack. We have to consider other possibilities as well. You should tell us the specifics, such as the details of the mural, and maybe we can find something useful.”

At this point, Alger began to look forward to receiving information.

Unlike the past, Derrick was clearly smarter. He didn't clumsily rely only on words to provide a description.

After receiving Mr. Fool's permission, he conjured a series of scenes from the memories that he could recall. He showed the exploratory process and the points he found important to The Hanged Man, Justice, The Magician, and The World in a fragmented fashion, and then he included some explanations for them.

The walls that had collapsed in the darkness, the streets that passed through the destroyed buildings, the stone pillar-propped white and blue ancient temple that was covered in dust under the light of the animal hide lantern, the statue that hung upside down from a pitch-black cross, the series of murals depicting the Fallen Creator who suffered from the sin in place of humanity, the exceptionally alluring "mushrooms," the statue at the altar that had strangely opened its eyes, and the young yellow-haired Jack who had been hiding in the back—all these scenes took shape and were reflected in the eyes of the Tarot Club members in the most direct and realistic manner.

The gloomy and dark tone, the sense of crisis with every step that was taken, and the bizarre development that The Sun was experiencing made Audrey rather excited. She became extremely interested in what he was saying.

This is the situation around the City of Silver... It's more attractive than any novel I've ever read... This is the charm of mystery, uncertainty, and terror combined... Of course, to the humans who live there, this isn't a good thing... Audrey's thoughts were in disarray. She wanted nothing more than to immediately become a powerhouse at the level of a demigod and venture into that region ruled by darkness and storms.

Klein watched and sighed emotionally.

He was sighing because it truly wasn't easy for the City of Silver to last all this time in such an environment. He sighed because Little Sun still wasn't smart enough and had no experience. Otherwise, he would've been able to completely present the events that happened in

the form of a movie or documentary. It would certainly be exciting and attractive!

However, this way, the description would take too long. My spirituality wouldn't be able to endure if everyone were to watch such a movie. Also, the longer one stays above the gray fog, the more likely it is that something bad will happen in the outside world... Klein suddenly felt lucky.

Alger finished watching in silence as he thought over it. He got The Sun to pick a few important points he had chosen to present them above the long bronze table. Among them included the mural of the Fallen Creator resisting the six "evil gods."

"Which evil gods are these?" Alger looked at the octopus with lightning wrapped around its body, black waves at its feet, an avian-feathered cloak on its back, and a three-pronged trident in its hand as he began to make connections.

Derrick shook his head honestly.

"I don't know. I thought you would know them."

Audrey and Fors cast their gazes over at the same time, carefully observing them several times, but they still failed to come up with any guesses.

They had originally thought that these were six of the eight ancient gods from the legends of the City of Silver, but they couldn't find a suitable match. After all, there was a dragon, an elf, a giant, a phoenix, and an Annihilation Demonic Wolf, while there was only one giant in the mural.

This... The Fool took a serious look and his pupils nearly contracted.

In consideration of his standing, he had only taken a cursory look at the mural in the beginning, but now, he finally realized that something was wrong.

This is very similar to the statues of the six gods which I saw in the Tudor family's underground ruin, except that one is a normal version and the other is a corrupted version... It really is a bit hard for people to look at it directly, especially Earth Mother, Lord of Storms, and

Eternal Blazing Sun. Not only have they been sullied as evil gods, but they're even akin to ugly monsters... Klein didn't feel a sense of sudden enlightenment from having realized the truth. He had expected the True Creator to disparage the six gods and distort their images.

However, I can't completely ignore the possibility of this mural appearing. Just like how I had always thought that the orthodox gods didn't have a human form, with only symbols left. As a result, the statues in the ruins of the Tudor family have made me less certain... It seems like the establishment of the images of the gods have undergone a long evolution, and many secrets are hidden within... Klein was relieved when he saw that Miss Justice was focusing on examining the mural and didn't pay attention to Mr. Fool's attitude.

Because it involved whether or not Little Sun could get out of the strange predicament of repeating that short period of life, he decided to tell them what he knew.

Of course, the long introduction and display of the images of the six gods inside the underground ruin didn't fit the identity of The Fool. He intended to control The World to complete this task.

And this was in line with his goal of making The World and Sherlock Moriarty equivalent.

The Fool should enigmatically say, "Evernight, Sun, Storm, Wisdom, Earth, Giant," and then give no explanation, with superfluous descriptions... Klein thought for two seconds and let The World say in a hoarse voice, "I've seen similar statues."

After attracting everyone's gaze, he paused and added, "In an adventure to a Fourth Epoch ruin."

Audrey was very interested, but she maintained her basic level of restraint.

"Mr. World, what kind of statues were there? Can you show it to us? Of course, if you aren't willing to, or if you require compensation, it's negotiable."

"There's no need, as this might also solve some of my doubts." The World smiled darkly.

He acted by making a request to Mr. Fool, and when he got permission, he conjured the statues of the six gods and their corresponding Sacred Emblems.

With her head against the full moon, the lady, who wore layers upon layers of hazy dresses that didn't repeat, gave off an exceptionally beautiful feeling. On her long black skirt, there were also specks of starlight, as if it were a night sky, and on top of that, that iconic Evernight Sacred Emblem. Audrey immediately recognized her to be the Evernight Goddess she worshiped.

This statue was most similar to the evil god in the upper left corner of the mural, but its face was more human, and there were no strange eyes hidden around it!

What sacrilege! This is sacrilegious to the Goddess! Audrey was a little angry, but she quickly calmed down.

As the most infamous evil god, it's expected that the True Creator would let his followers disfigure the Goddess... But, why would there be a humanoid sculpture of the goddess in the underground ruins... Isn't it said that the orthodox gods only have symbols? Audrey frowned slightly, lost in thought.

Alger felt somewhat enlightened as he said with a sigh, "So the murals depict the distorted images of the six gods.

"'They' really had humanoid images in the past..."

Perhaps this is the reason why the Churches have always been trying to find the Forsaken Land of God... As for the Forsaken Land of God, it's most likely hidden in the depths of the Sonia Sea. Yes, it definitely doesn't exist in a normal state; otherwise, it would be impossible for the deities to not notice it... Alger added silently inwardly.

The Sun was first taken aback before he came to a realization. "Mr. Hanged Man, are these the deities that all of you mentioned before—the Evernight Goddess, the Lord of Storms...?" "Yes," The Hanged Man gave an affirmative answer.

“What do ‘They’ have to do with the apocalypse? What does it have to do with our land being forsaken by the Lord?” Derrick subconsciously pressed.

Unfortunately, no one could answer him.

Fors raised her hand in confusion.

“Why is there no God of Steam and Machinery?” This was the god she believed in.

In the Northern and Southern Continents, the seven gods had always been equal!

“Rumor has it that the God of Steam and Machinery, also known as the God of Craftsmanship, wasn’t born until the Fourth Epoch. From the looks of it, it’s true, and the time node at which ‘He’ was born seems to be in the late Fourth Epoch, not in the early or mid-Fourth Epoch...” The Hanged Man said, a mixture of explanations and guesses.

He had an unconcealable enthusiasm for such topics.

So that’s the case... Fors felt a little guilty as she had never read the Steam and Machinery Bible seriously, and her faith appeared as just a way of life.

Derrick didn’t harp on the previous matter and instead asked, “Is this mural the key point?”

“Perhaps, you can try to break it, but don’t, heh, don’t let the chief suspect you.” The Hanged Man was about to say that he shouldn’t attempt to pronounce the honorific names of one of the six gods, or else ‘He’ or ‘They’ might directly descend into the Forsaken Land of God, but after careful consideration, he realized that the Little Sun didn’t know the corresponding honorific names at all.

“Alright. Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man. You’re always so kind and enthusiastic. Also, Miss Justice, Miss Magician, and Mr. World, you are similarly as kindhearted,” Derrick thanked them sincerely.

Kind? Enthusiastic? The Hanged Man was momentarily unsure of how to react.

This was the first time that someone had used such words to describe him.

After the discussion was over, Klein suddenly remembered something. In the previous exploration of the abandoned temple of the True Creator, the City of Silver found the name "Rose Redemption." However, it didn't seem to pay attention to this.

It can't be ignored... According to the evil spirit in the underground ruin, this extremely secretive organization is an organization led by fallen angels, and it is in no way inferior to the Twilight Hermit Order. Perhaps the "cyclic time" was set up by them... Thinking of this, The Fool, who was sitting upright in a high back chair, leisurely adjusted his posture and used his fingers to lightly tap the edge of the long, mottled table.

Audrey immediately turned her head and looked at Mr. Fool in excitement, waiting for 'Him' to give a hint.

The Hanged Man, The Sun, The Magician, and The World also looked expectantly at Mr. Fool.

Amid the fog, Klein chuckled and said, "Rose Redemption."

Rose Redemption? What is that... The key point to getting out of this predicament? That's right, there's such a name in the corner of a mural near the top of the temple! Derrick seemed to understand something.

Alger, Audrey, and Fors also recalled and gave the name "Rose Redemption" high importance, but they didn't fully understand the true meaning that Mr. Fool was trying to convey.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, what does Rose Redemption represent?" Audrey raised her hand and took the initiative to ask.

This time, Klein didn't respond other than giving a short laugh.

His idea was very simple. The organization, the Rose Redemption, was intricately tied to the True Creator. No matter what happened in the temple, it would always point to them in some way.

As for whether this name was a so-called key point, Klein wasn't sure or worried. After all, he held the right to interpretation.

If The Sun and the others misunderstood the real meaning, how could it be Mr. Fool's fault?

Seeing The Fool chuckling silently, Audrey and the others had no choice but to withdraw their gaze and stop asking questions.

In a situation like this where they were only given hints and not explanations, they didn't find it problematic. Existences at the level of deities typically had similar habits, and sometimes, what they gave weren't even hints, but revelations.

In the eyes of a powerful figure like Mr. Fool, just providing a single name is enough. Our failure to comprehend things is because we are lacking. We need to work harder at figuring out and attempting things... Audrey was increasingly looking forward to her future as a Psychiatrist.

"...I remember that there was something related to Rose Redemption in that semi-abandoned temple?" Alger tilted his head and looked at The Sun.

Without any hesitation, Derrick nodded and said, "Yes. It was text derived from Jotun in a corner of the murals. We used quite some time to decipher those words."

Text derived from Jotun... Alger hadn't paid much attention to this detail before, but he couldn't help but make connections at that moment in time.

That little boy, Jack, seems to have gone there from the Sonia Sea... Text derived from Jotun... Alger deliberated before making a request to conjure a line of text.

Those words were in ancient Feysac, the origins of the Northern Continent's language, and they meant: "Rose Redemption." Derrick took a closer look and was stunned.

"It's very close, but the way that the words end is handled differently.

"Mr. Hanged Man, is this a language from where you come from?"

As he spoke, Derrick conjured the text on the mural again.

"Yes." Alger gave an affirmative answer. "This language itself has evolved. The one you found should be of an earlier type."

In the world of linguistics, this type of language which is similar to ancient Feysac is widely regarded as a characteristic of the Solomon Empire... Historian Klein gave the most accurate answer in his mind.

Alger paused.

"What about the content of the corresponding mural?"

"I wasn't in charge of that area, and I didn't take a careful look before departing..." Derrick instantly felt ashamed.

Alger nodded without a change in expression.

"Find a chance to clarify this. There might be a crucial point hidden within."

"Alright!" Derrick was increasingly convinced that things weren't so bad after all.

Seeing that he had relaxed quite a bit, Audrey was a little curious and a little puzzled as she asked, "Mr. Hanged Man, if that young boy named Jack is the child of the Listener you described, why would he be able to communicate with The Sun and the others?"

After discussing the corresponding terms for "Rose Redemption," she was completely certain that the City of Silver used a different language compared to the other countries in the Northern and Southern Continent like Loen.

And above the gray fog, everyone is able to communicate fluently, without any gaps in communication. It's all thanks to Mr. Fool's powers... Audrey praised in her heart.

Alger scoffed as he looked at her.

"Miss Justice, you haven't experienced any Beyonder events, have you?

"Jack has already become such a terrifying monster, so what else can't he change? Trust me, there are times when language knowledge is very easy to obtain, with it taking just a second or two."

"..."

Audrey blinked, feeling that she had once again exposed that she didn't have much experience or knowledge in mysticism.

After this matter came to a close, the Tarot Gathering resumed as per the usual schedule. Audrey looked towards the end of the long bronze table and said, "Mr. Fool, this time there are three more Roselle diary pages. I still owe you seven."

Upon hearing that, Fors hurriedly added, "Mr. Fool, I also received some responses. There will be new Roselle diary pages the next time."

"Very well." Klein chuckled in response.

By the side, Derrick suddenly felt ashamed again, because he hadn't had time to visit the library last week to look through any material and memorize historical details due to his participation in the exploratory team.

After a simple process, Klein picked up the three diary pages which were conjured, and he began to read with great anticipation.

"8th August. For the first time, I was invited to the White Maple Palace to attend a ball held by His Majesty.

"These aristocrats are really f*cking extravagant, with the food they eat completely being in pursuit of novelty. Things like grilled swans, sheep's testicles...

"I have to say, I was very surprised at the beginning. The aristocrats of this world, yes—this is limited only to aristocrats, really love cleanliness; it's common for them to take baths, and toilet paper has already taken a nascent form. They totally aren't like the aristocrats of Earth's middle ages.

"I originally thought that this was an effect of the existence of true gods, but I was later informed that this was an improvement that had to be made because of some kind of threat. Beyonders of a particular Sequence are able to spread the plague through dirty habits. I wonder which pathway and Sequence that is.

"At that time, my first thought was that there's something wrong with these aristocrats' brains, right? Since they're afraid of the plague, why

don't they clean up the streets? Why didn't they build a complete sewage system? Why don't they uplift the slums?

"They're all in the same city. Does this mean that this place will be fine when there's a plague over there?

"Well, with water sources, food, and people isolated and them moving only in one direction, perhaps it really will be alright...

"But there are plagues that can be transmitted through the air! When I hold a high position, I must push for urban planning and clean up the environment. Even without the plague, just living in such a stinking city is still very annoying!

"Oh right, I've been summoned tonight by His Majesty.

"I thought that since I was born on Earth, I, who received an education of all men being equal, would be neither humble nor arrogant and appear rather calm. But in fact, I remained very nervous and excited, unconsciously bending my waist and bowing my head. Of course, I know that in terms of dignity, I'm equal to the King...

"This is the charm of power!"

Even though this entire page is filled with daily activities, the Emperor has still managed to make me laugh... He was also someone with a goal... Indeed, even for someone born in the modern world, they will still become apprehensive and sycophantic when faced with someone of high status, a person who can influence their fates... Klein smiled, his mood much more relaxed.

He turned to the second page and continued reading.

"11th November. About to advance to Sequence 4 to become a demigod.

"After this, as long as I don't lose control, then my life's natural order will experience a qualitative change. I would no longer be a short-lived creature. Of course, different Sequences of different pathways will be in different states.

"I faced two choices. One is Alchemist of the Savant pathway, and the other is Mysticologist of the Mystery Pryer pathway. Eventually, I

chose not to change pathways since the Hidden Sage is a very dangerous existence. However, I ultimately suspect that 'He' isn't a real deity. Perhaps, 'He' is of a slightly lower level.

"After becoming an Alchemist, I will be able to inject 'soul' into the items I create and give them life. This is the feeling of being a Creator. It will definitely be excellent. It's also the reason why I continued choosing this Beyonder pathway.

"After obtaining this Sequence's Beyonder characteristic, I should be able to complete more of my concepts. There will come a day when the saying, 'it's not that we aren't working hard, it's just that the cheat has a Gundam.' It will be a Gundam in the truest meaning of the word!

"The only problem is that the corresponding ritual of Alchemist needs to extract all the life force of a particular region, desertification of the land and the drying of lakes... Why is this not much different from a cult's sacrificial ritual...

"I've always felt that the potion Sequence system has too many dark and crazy parts to it. Occasionally, it would be so evil that it can make one despair."

The Emperor also feels the same way... Seeing this, Klein couldn't help but sigh.

Sometimes, he also felt that the background color of this world was grayish-black and crazy.

Things like the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation and Indestructibility, the laws of pathway convergence, and interchangeability of close Sequences all bring about change that leads to tragedy.

Alchemist is a very interesting Sequence. Alchemical Life sounds forbidden and is a domain very close to that of deities... I wonder if the Emperor made any Gundams before he was assassinated... Probably not... Klein's thoughts drifted away for a moment.

He was rather curious about the ritual of becoming a demigodlike High-Sequence Beyonder. Unfortunately, Roselle didn't record much of it. After all, it was a diary, not a notebook.

Sequence 4 Mysticologist of the Mystery Pryer pathway sounds good too... Klein turned over the second diary page and displayed the third page in front of him.

"23rd April. This bunch of aristocrats really are a mess! I even thought that Ma'am Karen had seduced me for sex because she had taken a fancy for my inner self. But who knew that her husband, the Earl of Champagne, was peeping in the opposite room. He was even thrilled and even f**king wanted to f**k me!

"I'm sorry, but I just can't accept it, so I had to kick him out of the room.

"Compared to their family, I'm just a pure child!"

"..."

Klein was momentarily speechless. He felt that the private life of Emperor Roselle was really filled with excitement and that many of the Intis aristocracy were also sufficiently eccentric.

If some aristocrat tries to seek novelty and finds a curly-haired baboon, some kind of disease might even be born... Klein sighed and looked down.

"25th April. To cultivate my character and hone my mind, I went fishing at Swan Lake. I hope that one day I can go fishing at sea for a mermaid.

"Sigh, I've been quite depraved recently. I have to invigorate my spirit and invent more things. I can't leave any gaps! Since I transmigrated to this world, I will brand this era with my name!"

...Emperor, it's better if you had fallen into depravity... Klein's mouth twitched without any intention of making comment.

Then, he calmly looked at the last diary entry on the last page.

"26th April. Zaratul came visiting. I deliberately asked him what a miracle was.

"He asked me in return about what I thought it was.

“What I think it is? There is only one miracle in my heart, and that is the wonders of civilization! For example, the Great Twilight Hall of the Feysac Empire, the former residence of the Giant King, Aurmir.

“Zaratul finally gave a direct answer.

“He said, ‘What is a miracle? A miracle is to be resurrected from the dead!’”

A miracle is to be resurrected from the dead?

Klein suddenly remembered what had happened to him!

The head injury of a man who shot himself in the head miraculously healing; a Beyonder who, having died from having his heart crushed, crawled out of his grave in the middle of the night—are these considered "miracles" of being resurrected from the dead? Is this the "miracle" the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul, spoke of? And Sequence 2 of the Seer pathway is called a Miracle Invoker! At this moment, Klein felt like he had grasped something important, but he was unable to piece together all the clues to form the truth he wanted.

As I had guessed before, there are other factors at work for my choice of having Seer as my beginning Sequence... My greatest support is the mysterious space above the gray fog which happens to eliminate all interference and provide Seers the most coveted environment... My characteristic of "resurrection" also seems to have come from the gray fog as well...

When I came to Backlund, the events in which Marionettist Rosago was involved in were naturally drawn to me, which is consistent with the convergence of Beyonder characteristics of the same pathway. The higher "quality" it is, the stronger the attraction as the effects appear intermittently... The sudden change in the Antigonus family notebook's style of passing key information to me, related to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range via the Misfortune Cloth Puppet, might also be a result of such elements...

Combined with the other miscellaneous phenomena, does it mean that this mysterious space has a very close relationship with the Seer Beyonder pathway? That this is a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact of the corresponding Sequence? Or perhaps it's a divine kingdom left behind by a Sequence 0 of the same pathway?

There's also the possibility of it being the so-called "Uniqueness" of the Seer pathway...

Klein moved his gaze away from Roselle's diary, his anticipation for advancing to a High-Sequence Beyonder increasing. He wondered what he would discover in the hidden area after he completed the staircase of light.

Perhaps the reason for my transmigration and the way home will be found there... He suppressed his excitement and allowed Roselle's diary pages to disappear from his hands.

At the same time, he became increasingly wary of the leader of the Secret Order, Zaratul.

He was a powerful existence that had long since become a Miracle Invoker from the Seer pathway many years ago!

There might be times and matters that have his fingerprints hidden all over them!

Although all of these thoughts were churning in his mind, Klein acted as though nothing had happened as he calmly said, "You can begin your transactions."

Fors immediately turned to look at Miss Justice who sat on the same side of the table, and she said with expectation, "I have received a reply. My teacher has a pair of Mirror Dragon eyes.

The price is 1,000 pounds."

Upon saying that, Fors felt a little uneasy. This was because Dorian Gray Abraham's reserve price was 800 pounds, which was already at a premium above the usual 500–600 pounds. And on that foundation, she had added another 200 pounds.

After attending so many Tarot Gatherings and all kinds of Beyonder circles, I finally understand one thing. Just like Emperor Roselle said, money isn't omnipotent, but nothing can be done without money...

Although I've already received the fixed payment for my new book and have savings reaching 350 pounds, there's still the Spirit Eater stomach pouch awaiting me. There's also all kinds of expenses needed for Sequence 7, 6, 5, and even 4... The meaning before Mr. Fool's secret hint is that I should be able to be freed from the curse of the full moon once I become a High-Sequence Beyonder... Even if I can find some of

them through Teacher, I can't fully rely on him and the Abraham family...

In this regard, saving up money on my own isn't enough, and efforts must be made to make money...

The price of 1,000 pounds is really expensive. If Miss Justice wishes to bargain, I'll later tell her that Teacher agreed to lower the price by 100 pounds after repeated negotiations... As Fors waited for the reply, she consoled herself.

"1,000 pounds?" Audrey never expected to receive news for the Psychiatrist potion ingredients so quickly, so she subconsciously asked in a confirming tone.

Without waiting for a reply from Fors, she happily added, "Okay, deal!"

Although she still owed Viscount Glaint a final installment and still owed The Fool's Blessed 2,000 pounds, she would officially be declared an adult at the New Year's Ball. Not only would her control over her wealth be greater than ever before, but she would also receive many valuable gifts, such as the one promised by her father, Earl Hall, a few days earlier. He had promised to give his dear daughter a further 50,000 pounds in Backlund Bank shares and more than 2,000 pounds in cash. Hence, 1,000 pounds wasn't a number that she was bothered with.

Audrey had originally asked Mr. Fool to extend the payment period of the 2,000 pounds to February or March in order, on the one hand, to pay off her debt to Viscount Glaint, and to save up money as discreetly as possible without arousing suspicion. On the other hand, she had to set aside an additional budget for the ingredients of the Psychiatrist potion.

Now was the time to use the budget!

At most, I'll have to tighten my belt like how I did for the past few months. After March, there wouldn't be any problems! Audrey thought, not troubled at all.

She agreed? She agreed... Fors was both happy and confused.

Fors asked Mr. Fool to bear witness to the transaction and arranged for Miss Justice to make the payment first before she delivered the Beyonder ingredient on Wednesday. As Fors decided to head for Pritz Harbor immediately upon receiving the cash, without wasting any time in the middle, she looked at the three gentlemen—The Sun, The Hanged Man, and The World.

"Does anyone have any information on the Spirit Eater stomach pouch?"

After calming down, she discovered that with her experience in the acting method, she could digest the excess Beyonder characteristic much faster than she had expected. One week was almost equivalent to two weeks of the past.

In about ten days, she would be able to completely digest and resolve the problem.

When she gathered the ingredients and advanced to

Trickmaster, she felt that she would be able to perfectly pass the first test given by her teacher, Dorian. She would gain more attention and would no longer be a mere student who was taken in out of gratitude.

Derrick nodded and said, "I was just about to tell you that during this exploration, we obtained some Spirit Eater stomach pouches. I can exchange it at low prices after I return to the City of Silver. Uh, that's under the premise that I'm no longer under surveillance."

"Okay, but it seems that you have no use for gold pounds?" Fors asked directly.

After the operation to save Little Sun, she had a preliminary understanding of the City of Silver.

Without waiting for The Sun to say a word, Alger interjected, "You can hand me the corresponding cash or gold coins to me. 300 pounds is a very reasonable price. I will provide the Solar High Priest potion formula to The Sun."

"Mr. Hanged Man, you have the formula to Solar High Priest?" Derrick asked in pleasant surprise.

During his previous patrols and his recent explorations, he had increasingly felt that the powers of the Sun pathway were perfect for dealing with the dark.

Although the Giant pathway's Sequence 6 Dawn Paladin could already create the light of dawn, in the realm of the Holy and Light, it's still inferior to a Light Suppliant!

The Hanged Man nodded slightly and said, "That's right!"

He had found the Solar High Priest potion formula in a treasury of the Rorsted Archipelago, but it was only recently that he had found an opportunity to provide sufficient justification and have the sufficient conditions to have the right to read it once.

The reason that he gave was that people suspected to be priests of the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun had appeared on the Sonia Sea, and since he was temporarily unable to return to the Intis Republic, he could only search for the potion ingredients corresponding to Solar High Priest. Moreover, the hatred for the Eternal Blazing Sun could turn mere rumors into the basis for action by the Church of Storms.

Derrick was delighted at first, but he soon said with some awkwardness, "The value of the Sequence 7 potion formula is higher than a Spirit Eater's stomach pouch. I... I don't have the gold pounds all of you were talking about."

"You can repay it with ingredients of the same value," The Hanged Man gave a terse response. "But I don't know what I can get from you... First, you should make a list of the common monsters found around the City of Silver and their

corresponding ingredients. I'll then choose from that list."

"No problem. After this exploration is over, I will do it as quickly as possible." Derrick was visibly relieved.

By the side, Klein wanted to facepalm, but in the end, he didn't manipulate The World to break the deal. It was because he also wanted to know what kind of monsters and ingredients were common around the City of Silver.

As Audrey secretly sighed, The Hanged Man looked around and raised his request.

"I need a pair of Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyes. I'll pay the necessary compensation."

He only mentioned the Dragon-Eyed Sea Condor eyes... In other words, Mr. Hanged Man has clues regarding the Blue Shadow Falcon's crystalline feathers... He really does have many channels and resources... Audrey, who had seen the potion formula for Wind-blessed, thought with some enlightenment.

After the transactions came to an end, they began to freely exchange information about their areas, and the end of the Tarot Gathering quickly approached.

During the process, The World inquired for clues about mermaids and obtained an answer similar to the one he had received from Sharron.

When everything was over, Klein, who had been watching quietly, thought it necessary to warn Miss Justice and Miss Magician.

A terrifying object that is suspected to be a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact has appeared around Prince Edessak. It might even involve 0-08, which would definitely not be a simple matter. Furthermore, the last time a similar situation occurred, Tingen City had faced the threat of an evil god's spawn, and it had almost disappeared from the map! Hence, now there's also a hidden danger in Backlund! Klein thought for a few seconds, making The World say in a hoarse voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have recently received some information that a major event is brewing in Backlund. This will bring about a great deal of unrest and may lead to a tragedy."

"What's the major event?" Audrey asked with concern.

Unknowingly, her brow had begun to slightly furrow.

"I don't know." The World shook his head calmly.

"Where would the element of unrest and the possible tragedy come from?" Fors asked nervously.

From the previous gatherings, she had confirmed that Mr. World's sources were trustworthy.

The World acted stumped as he shook his head and said, "There's contradictory information, making it impossible for me to give a definite answer."

Upon saying this, he looked up and earnestly cast his gaze towards the figure within the gray fog at the end of the mottled table.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, your Blessed in Backlund must've detected something, right?"

Everyone's eyes immediately focused towards the end of the long bronze table, with everyone feeling different feelings—curiosity, worry, anticipation, and tenseness.

With the attention on him, Klein leaned back and said in a casual tone, "Edessak Augustus."

Prince Edessak Augustus? What connection does he have with the danger that might lead to tragedy? Moreover, this matter seems to have received the attention of Mr. Fool! Audrey instantly matched the name with a face, giving rise to great worry and doubt in her.

In her opinion, things that caught the attention of Mr. Fool were either very dangerous, extremely secretive, or had far-reaching importance, and were by no means simple. For example, the True Creator had attempted to descend upon Backlund with the help of Lanevus and the harsh conditions of East Borough's factory district, Emperor Roselle's Black Emperor card, or the death of the Duke Negan, and the Twilight Hermit Order.

Taking these examples into account, Audrey had good reason to believe that, if not handled well, or given too little attention, the major event involving Prince Edessak would inevitably lead to a very, very terrible storm!

Yes... Prince Edessak hasn't bothered me for quite some time, and I was only relieved by that and didn't think too much about it. Now, it does seem a little problematic... At the previous ball, he still warmly kept me back to discuss some boring topics, trying his hand at pompous bad humor. But just two or three days after that, he turned rather cold and had even deliberately avoided me... I have to find a chance to ask Father about him, but I can't show too much curiosity, or else it might be very possible that he would agree to the royal family's marriage request... Audrey recalled some details, and she suddenly felt her shoulders sink from the weight.

She had never liked Prince Edessak, including his two elder brothers, and she had no intention of becoming a princess consort. As for the reason, it was very simple. The followers of the Evernight Goddess couldn't accept that the Augustus family had believed in the Lord of Storms for generations, which meant their arrogance, pomposity, contempt, and eccentricity against women had penetrated deep into their bones. It was hard to change them which was the one thing Audrey couldn't tolerate the most.

When she thought of the strict, ancient, and extremely conservative environment she would find herself in after becoming a princess consort, Audrey felt that she would surely go crazy and flee, disregarding everything else. So, she wasn't moved at all by the rather solicitous flattery of the princes; she was even very repulsed.

Edessak Augustus... The last name implies that he's a member of the royal family. I vaguely remember that he's a prince? What dangerous matter is he going to do? I have no way of coming into contact with him... Right, I can ask Miss Audrey and Viscount Glaint for help, but I have to think of a reason ahead of time to prevent any suspicion from them... Fors frowned slightly as she interpreted Mr. Fool's words.

Alger was very interested in the matter, but he didn't dare to ask Mr. Fool, who was obviously just providing a hint. He could only ponder to himself for two seconds before saying to Justice, The Magician, and The World, "The atmosphere over the sea isn't calm either. It might have a connection with Backlund, just like those machines."

His words were completely baseless. He simply wanted to exaggerate the degree of the danger and let the three Tarot Club members in Backlund investigate it diligently.

...I have to say that Mr. Hanged Man has acted in concert so well... Klein, who was watching from the sidelines, gave up on the idea of having The World say something similar.

He only mentioned Prince Edessak, but not the lady with the sapphire ring who was suspected of having a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact. He didn't even mention the possibility that the matter Prince Edessak might be involved in had to do with 0-08 and Ince Zangwill because he didn't know the circumstances of the top Sealed Artifact that could even destroy a country. All he could rely on were minute clues to make guesses that he wasn't completely sure of. He was afraid that if he directly told the key points to Justice and Miss Magician, their investigations would be detected by the target the moment they honed in on the target.

This was also why Klein didn't try to find an opportunity to inform the Machinery Hivemind. Based on his guesses about Sealed Artifact 0-

08, he suspected that if he left Minsk Street and rode a horse carriage to the Lever Cathedral or the Steam Cathedral, he would encounter an unexpected and absolutely unstoppable attack, such as the eruption of a Sealed Artifact hidden underground or a fatal strike of a High-Sequence Beyonder.

Only the screening of the gray fog allowed Klein to not worry about such problems. To a certain extent, he could inform Justice and The Magician about this through a more gentle, more roundabout, and more veiled manner.

In addition, Klein had other plans. It was to "leave" Backlund by bowing out the stage as a side character among side characters and changing his appearance without anyone noticing. He would then secretly return and contact the Machinery Hivemind in a manner beyond the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact's senses!

Let's hope this will succeed. I hope there's a chance of finding Ince Zangwill! Yes, the premise is that he is indeed involved in this matter... Wait a minute, while Mr. Azik was after Ince Zangwill, he had a conflict with MI9. He became secretly wanted, and MI9 has always been considered to be a pro-royal faction in the military... A series of coincidences revolving Prince Edessak is rather similar to the features displayed by Sealed Artifact 0-08 in the past... This seems to indirectly confirm Ince Zangwill's existence...

Klein closed his eyes, and the bright boots and pale hand flashed back to him.

He leaned back in his chair, his lips curving upward.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we shall meet next week."

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey stood in front of the full-length mirror, staring blankly at her reflection.

There were good news and bad news for her at this Tarot Gathering.

The good news was that she was about to receive one of the Psychiatrist potion's main ingredients.

Although she was no longer the ignorant girl who had bought some basic general knowledge from The Hanged Man for a thousand pounds and knew the approximate price of a lot of Beyonder ingredients, she didn't mind paying a premium for the eyes of a Mirror Dragon.

After Duke Negan's assassination, she gained the desire and motivation to raise her Sequence to receive the corresponding combat strength. For this, she didn't want to wait any longer and was willing to pay a price—as long as the ingredients appeared, she would immediately accept the offer as long as the price wasn't too outrageous, in case something unexpected happened.

It's like a precious piece of jewelry that many noble ladies have set their eyes on. It's also like the purebred houses with unique bloodlines that men like. The corresponding premium is inevitable and unavoidable. At times, it's not impossible to have the price double or triple... Besides, with Fors busying herself in the process of contacting her teacher, she definitely shouldn't be left wasting her time while taking on risks. Yes... She also doesn't know that I'm Justice... Audrey thought indifferently.

As for the bad news, it was no doubt related to the matter of Prince Edessak. It left her concerned and worried.

Fortunately, Mr. World received the news, and Mr. Fool had provided a warning. Otherwise, who knows how things would've turned out... Audrey, with such excellent conditions, you could certainly solve this problem! Come on! The girl drew the sign of the crimson moon against the reflection in the mirror and tried hard to be optimistic.

Then, she restrained her emotions and headed out to the piano room, preparing to participate in her scheduled piano lesson as if nothing had happened.

This was because Earl Hall and his wife, as well as Hibbert Hall wouldn't be home until dinner, and she had no one to ask for information now. She could only tell herself to be calm, to be composed, and to be patient.

Before the tutor arrived, Audrey casually played the piano, using the beautiful melody to cleanse her mind and soul.

When she finished playing, she noticed that Susie had opened the door at some point and was sitting beside her. She still had a pair of gold-rimmed glasses hanging around her neck.

“Audrey, what problems did you encounter? The sound of your piano tells me that you’re frustrated over something,” Susie said suddenly.

Uh... Audrey froze, not knowing how to reply.

She suddenly felt that having a “mind-reading dog” at home wasn’t necessarily a good thing...

...

Within the campsite that had a lit bonfire.

With his eyes closed, Derrick Berg thought back quietly to what had happened at the Tarot Gathering and made sure that he hadn’t forgotten the memories of his repeated experiences.

After an unknown period of time, he opened his eyes, which were brimming with anticipation, and looked around. However, what entered into his eyes were flames and his teammates, who were exactly the same as in his memories.

At that moment, the cross-legged Demon Hunter Colin, who was leaning against a stone pillar, said, “We will set off after 50 rounds of lightning.”

At this moment, Derrick was sure that everything that had happened before wasn’t a dream or a hallucination.

...

Cherwood Borough. 15 Minsk Street.

Klein went down to the first floor and sat in the activity room, feeling the warmth of the fireplace.

He quietly rocked in the reclining chair without reading the newspapers, magazines, or even books.

It was all so peaceful and silent until he heard the ringing of his doorbell.

Klein, who was wearing a house shirt and cashmere vest, got up and walked towards the door. The visitor took him by surprise.

He opened the door and chuckled.

“Good afternoon, Emlyn. Aren’t you supposed to be helping at the Harvest Church at this hour?”

It was the handsome, somewhat effeminate, Vampire Emlyn White, whose hair was combed back at an angle.

The arrogant man’s expression froze when he heard Klein’s greeting. It took him a bit of effort to recover his composure.

“I have something to consult with you, Detective. Sherlock.

Moriarty!” Emlyn enunciated one word at a time.

After inviting him into the activity room, Klein returned to his reclining chair and asked with a smile, “What is it? The fee for a consultation is one pound, but the consultation cannot exceed an hour.”

Emlyn White didn’t pay attention to his words, and he said while deep in thought, “A big shot wants me to do something... Although that matter can help me solve my problem indirectly, it also contains a great amount of risk.

“I don’t have any friends, and I’m afraid my parents will be worried, and you’re a very knowledgeable Beyonder detective... What do you suggest? Reject or accept?”

Solve your problem? Clearing the psychological cue? Klein said thoughtfully, “I can’t give you any advice with just the word ‘something.’”

Emlyn White fell silent for a few seconds before he clenched his teeth and said in a low voice, “It has something to do with that

Fool...”

“Huh?” Klein almost lifted his hand to his ear.

After a second of confirmation, Klein clasped his hands together and leaned forward.

"What exactly is this something?"

"No, I can't say any further." Emlyn White shook his head firmly.

Afraid of being probed, Klein didn't pursue the matter. He simply analyzed the situation based on the information that the vampire had just revealed.

Something to do with The Fool... It can help Emlyn White resolve his problem... Contains a high risk... Combined with his previous ideas, this seems to indicate that he intended to hold an appropriate ritual to pray to The Fool, which is also me, so as to eliminate the psychological cue and gain his long-awaited freedom... However, this is no longer a ritual that Emlyn will be holding himself. It's a result of a particular big shot's instructions, and with this vampire's pride, for him to address the person that way, it most likely means that the person is a powerhouse among the Sanguine... Why would a Sanguine big shot send a descendant to pray to The Fool? Have they started working with the Aurora Order?

Confused, Klein looked up at the expectant Emlyn and scoffed to himself.

Try guessing if I'll respond to your prayers.

He hesitated for two seconds and didn't make a suggestion.

Instead, he said, "Statistically speaking, when praying to a hidden existence without understanding the situation, 30 out of 100 cases would not receive any response. 68 cases will end up encountering all sorts of terrible things and cause them to lose their lives, or live a life worse than death. Only two cases have the possibility of success, allowing them to get what they want, but the price they pay might not be what they want."

As a former keyboard warrior, Klein had always believed that when it came to proving something or reinforcing a point of view, anyone who

just gave an example, an exception, without mentioning the entire sample and overall statistics was being an asshole. It was merely a trick of concept, and in these cases, there were usually similar companion words, such as “I have a friend,” “a girl I know,” or “someone around me.”

Therefore, to convince Emlyn White, he deliberately fabricated some data.

Of course, this wasn’t entirely baseless. At least, many of the files which Klein had read while he was a member of a Nighthawks team had described similar situations.

“Only two cases of success? Problems happen to 68 cases?” Startled, Emlyn couldn’t help but lift his hand to smooth his hair.

“Basically, that is the level of danger over the matter you’re going to do. If you have malicious intentions, the risk is even higher than this,” Klein replied sincerely.

Emlyn shook his head subconsciously.

“No, there’s no malice. B-besides, the big shot will protect me in the process.”

No malice? Uh, even if you have malice, you might not know since you’re just cannon fodder who has been pushed to the front lines... Klein raised his right palm and strengthened his tone with a gesture.

“This will reduce the risk by a lot, but it definitely won’t reduce it to zero. Does that big shot really have the means to resist a hidden existence?”

“...Probably, not,” Emlyn answered haltingly.

“So.” Klein spread his hands.

He suddenly revealed a smile and said, “Emlyn, there is no need for you to take this risk. Even if you completely believe in Earth Mother, it will not affect your life in any way. Look at the citizens of Feynapotter; don’t they eat, dress, and do whatever they want? When the time comes, there’s a high chance that Father Utravsky will no

longer force you to do volunteer work at the Harvest Church. You will regain your original freedom.

"Furthermore, I believe that you have adapted well to the teachings of Earth Mother without any contradictions."

Emlyn White remained silent for a while and said, "Being a believer because I like 'Her' beliefs is completely different from being forcefully turned into a believer through a psychological cue. Even if I do abandon the moon one day and believe in Earth Mother, I also hope that it is a choice that I freely made. It has nothing to do with others; this is the last pride of a Sanguine."

Klein looked at Emlyn with some surprise. He hadn't expected him to be so insistent.

He considered for two seconds and didn't try to persuade him again by giving a terse acknowledgment.

"The problem is actually very simple, that is, do you have the courage to face a certain degree of danger because of the orders of the big shot and the temptation to get rid of the cue. If you're willing to sacrifice your life for this, then the answer is extremely simple.

"In short, this matter will ultimately be left to you to decide."

Emlyn listened with a heavy expression, and he instinctively retorted, "If I really choose to make the attempt, it's definitely not for myself, but for all Sanguine! Resolving this problem is just an additional perk!"

For all Sanguine? What matter of mine involves all Sanguine? That big shot was lying to you, right? Klein sneered.

"Do you believe that a weak vampire has the chance to save an entire race?"

"Sanguine, Sanguine!" Emlyn emphasized. "Moreover, my strength isn't bad either. It's equivalent to Sequence 7 of you humans. By the way, it's the kind that specializes in combat!

"As for whether you believe it or not, you wouldn't understand." He stood up and said, "Although your analysis and suggestions are

meaningless, I still have to thank you. Uh, the consultation fee will be deducted from the previous suitcase and tin box."

"Huh?" Klein wasn't able to react for a moment to what he was talking about.

It was only when Emlyn had left that he suddenly realized what he meant.

Aren't the vessels in large transactions usually free?

That petty and stingy vampire!

...

In the darkness, in which the frequency of lightning had yet to resume, the exploratory team from the City of Silver "punctually" arrived at the periphery of the abandoned temple.

Derrick remembered that during their first operation, all the animal hide lanterns had been extinguished here. The entire team fell into pure darkness, and he had also heard the creepy "cry for help" coming from the depths of the temple.

According to the conjectures from Mr. Hanged Man and Miss Justice, this might be the starting point for our repeated cycles. But why would we wake up in the campsite outside the city and not directly here? Remembering the discussion at the Tarot meeting, Derrick raised his arm and prayed secretly, as suggested.

A pure light suddenly burst out from his body, causing Joshua and the other members of the exploratory team to quickly assume battle positions.

"What happened?" Demon Hunter Colin drew his sword and asked in a deep voice.

Derrick looked left and right in "horror" and said, "Your Excellency, I just heard a child crying 'save me... save me...'" He wanted to test if this was a key point!

"And now?" Colin asked warily.

"I don't hear it anymore." Derrick listened carefully.

Demon Hunter Colin glanced at Joshua and the others from the corner of his eye. “Did any of you hear it?”

“No.” The exploratory team members shook their heads.

After pondering for a few seconds, Colin came to a decision. He took out a dark blue metal bottle from the secret compartment in his belt and smeared the colorless, viscous liquid on his sword.

Then, he stabbed upwards with his sword.

Suddenly, the sky lit up. Streaks of silver, snake-like beams started to surge upwards, quickly spreading in all directions.

The silver-white light instantly enveloped all the members of the exploratory team, as if illuminating the darkest “corner” of every single one of them.

With a sizzling sound, the silver serpents drilled into the void, heading off into the unknown.

Everything calmed down very quickly, leaving only the dim light of the animal hide lanterns scattered in silence.

Colin narrowed his eyes, whatever he attempted had sensed something unknown. After a full five seconds, he raised his hand and pointed forward.

“From now on, we can’t afford to be careless. We have to be on

full alert.”

Such familiar words... This isn’t the key to breaking out of this predicament... Derrick calmed his heart and followed the team into the half-deserted temple without any delay.

This time, he learned his lesson and didn’t look at the face of the Fallen Creator. In the process of inspecting the ground, he managed to get himself to investigate the area where the mural was by being proactive.

He held onto the animal hide lantern and the Axe of Hurricane in his hands as he and one of his teammates began to take action as a small team.

He finally reached his destination after passing through a series of mottled and crumbling walls.

As the light from the animal hide lantern grew closer, the mural on the wall gradually became clearer.

Derrick first looked towards the corner and found the strange, memorable line of words.

Rose Redemption... he silently chanted the name, raised the animal hide lantern, and carefully examined the details of the mural.

On the highest area of the mottled wall was a huge, blurry, pitch-black cross. A shadow that was difficult to discern was hanging upside down on it.

Against such a backdrop, there was a desolate plain.

In the plains, there was a long line of people. Their destination was a distant mountain—the cross on top of the mountain, and the figure hanging upside down.

Within the line, some of the people were kneeling on the ground, praying devoutly. Others had already stood up and were walking forward while facing a raging wind.

Their faces were simple sketches, as though it was trying to highlight their tattered clothing. Only the leader at the front was relatively clearer.

It was a tall and thin man with long, silver hair reaching his back.

This man had soft facial features; his head was lowered, and his eyes were tightly shut. There were layers upon layers of wings of light on his back.

Angel! A legendary angel! Derrick observed the situation around the leader with excitement.

Soon, he discovered a meandering, rippling river beneath the feet of the seemingly angelic man.

The river kept twisting and turning, and it led back into itself, becoming the source!

A cycle! This creates a cycle! Derrick felt that he had caught on to something important.

In the cycles of experiences, there was actually a circular river in the mural on the wall!

The latter was obviously hinting or revealing something!

Derrick looked up and saw the silver-haired angel with an uncountable number of wings. There was a touch of indifference in the gentleness of his face, as though he was looking down at a river, looking down at fate.

Is this the true meaning behind Mr. Fool's hint? Derrick thought for a moment and decided to give it a try—if he succeeded, he planned on blaming all his anomalies on the boy, Jack. If he failed, no one would remember what he had done!

Under the stunned gaze of his teammates, Derrick raised the Axe of Hurricane and viciously slashed at the river in the mural.

The lightning that had just flashed by was triggered, and the silver light fell onto the axe.

Chapter 466: Tail-devourer

Bam!

Derrick's axe, wrapped in streaks of silver, struck the river in the mural, causing the wall to cave in and stone chips to fly everywhere.

With one strike, the river that had its source connected to its mouth completely disintegrated.

Just as he was looking forward to having the cycle broken, resulting in the members of the exploratory team escaping the temple, Demon Hunter Colin's figure phased away and appeared before him, his face grim.

"What were you doing?"

The tip of the demigod's sword was still pointed downwards, but the grip on his hilt was clearly tighter than before.

Thinking back to the collective wisdom of the Tarot Club members, Derrick said, half 'doubtfully' and half 'fearfully,' "Your Excellency, a black shadow flashed past here just now. It's true! It looked like the figure of a child!"

Without looking away, Colin Iliad asked another team member, "Haim, did you see it?"

The exploratory team member named Haim subconsciously moved closer to the Chief, firmly shook his head, and said, "No, I didn't see anything."

Colin's light blue eyes immediately glowed, revealing two complex dark green symbols.

He watched Derrick in this state for four to five seconds.

Finally, he withdrew his gaze and said in a normal tone, "This is your first exploration mission; hallucinations due to being nervous is normal.

"Subsequently, you are to stay by my side. I think you'll be calmer this way."

"Yes, Your Excellency," Derrick agreed without any hesitation.

Having just made an attempt, he confirmed that the mural wasn't critical.

The Rose Redemption that Mr. Fool suggested likely hides a deeper meaning; it's not that simple... Derrick walked silently beside Chief Colin with the Axe of Hurricane in hand.

What happened afterward wasn't much different from the explorations he remembered from his previous explorations. Everyone repeated the events in the past and arrived at the final hall with an altar for the sixth time. There, they found the yellow-haired boy, Jack, curled up in the shadows.

Upon hearing "save me... save me..." and seeing the silhouette of the child, Demon Hunter Colin nodded his head indiscernibly and retracted most of the attention he had placed on Derrick Berg.

Just as he was deliberating his words, Derrick suddenly asked, "How can we save you?"

Jack revealed an excited expression.

"Save me, save me, send me home! Send me home!"

"Where is your home?" Derrick asked, curious and frightened.

Seeing this, Colin shut his mouth and tightened his grip.

Jack raised his hand weakly and said, "My home, my home is at Enmat Harbor!"

Enmat Harbor... Although Mr. Hanged Man never mentioned it, from the word "harbor", Jack really doesn't belong to this place of ours. It's very likely that he comes from the outside world, from the Loen Kingdom where Miss Justice and the others are located! Derrick was overjoyed, unable to hide his excitement.

His reaction didn't arouse any suspicion from Demon Hunter Colin, because this powerful chief of the six-member council had also never seen the sea. He could only read from the preserved books that this body of water was many times larger than a lake, as well as the term "harbor."

The words that came out of the strange boy's mouth presented itself like a painting of a new world in front of Colin. This made him, who was desperately searching for the future of the City of Silver, forget about anything else as he blurted out, "How did you, or you and your companions, get here?" Jack showed a reminiscing expression.

"My father and I first traveled by boat, then we met up with his companions and continued on the voyage. After a huge storm, the rest of us touched ground and followed the direction of the Lord's gaze and came all the way here."

"Followed the direction of the Lord's gaze?" Demon Hunter Colin and the others looked at the deity statue in unison, trying to determine where he was staring at.

Soon, Colin was able to determine some general information.

They had proceeded in the direction of where the statue was looking at. That is to say, as soon as we reverse the process, we can find the shore and the place where they landed... The opposite direction of his gaze is... The map around the City of Silver, which was gradually being perfected through continuous explorations, appeared in Colin's mind, allowing him to come up with a preliminary sketch of the route of the boy's "journey."

If there are no other temples in the middle and no corresponding statues, extrapolating it all the way would pass through the ruins of the Giant King's Court! Colin's pupils suddenly contracted.

That was the palace that once housed the ancient god, Giant King Aurmir. It wasn't too far away from the City of Silver!

The descendants of the Kingdom of Silver, who had been ruled by the giants for generations, knew exactly where the ruins were located, but they were still unable to complete their exploration of the area because it was extremely dangerous, even more dangerous than the pure darkness!

According to Colin's extrapolations, the unfamiliar boy and his party had passed through the ruins of the Giant King's Court before arriving here.

How did they do it? Perhaps they didn't take a completely direct path, and they circled around the Giant King's Court... Regardless, there's a path that leads to the sea behind the Giant King's Court. And on the other end of the sea might be a human kingdom... Is that the hope of the City of Silver? Colin couldn't help resisting the thought.

At this moment, Derrick acutely noticed that the clothes on the boy's chest and abdomen were dyed dark red, as though some kind of liquid was slowly seeping out.

"Are you hurt?" he cautiously asked.

Jack lowered his head and replied in an erratic tone, "Something ugly is growing there..."

As he spoke, he took off his clothes, revealing his bare chest.

It was inlaid with two eyes, a nose, and a mouth!

It wasn't painted nor was it made of gems. They were real eyes, a real nose, and a real mouth in the purest sense of the word. Furthermore, they didn't seem to belong to one particular face but that of three people.

All of a sudden, Derrick imagined a scene in which Jack had used the remnants of his companions after eating them—their eyes, nose, and mouth—to form a strange face on his chest.

The face was gentle and indifferent, giving Derrick an inexplicable feeling of familiarity.

It took only a second or two for Derrick to figure out the reason for the familiarity.

The face was very much like the angel in the mural above them —the silver-haired angel with his feet over the circular river!

Sure enough, the reason we keep repeating the exploration is because of 'Him!' A thought struck Derrick, and he blurted out a single word, as though he was going to blurt the incantation to extricate himself from the predicament.

"Rose Redemption!" he solemnly shouted.

Jack raised his head and stared at him, his mouth slowly grinning wide before reaching his ears.

“I’m so hungry...

“So hungry...”

...Derrick froze as he saw a fierce battle ensue.

When he regained consciousness, he found himself sitting by the bonfire in the campsite again.

Rose Redemption isn’t the incantation... He began to reflect deeply.

The seventh exploration soon began. Derrick, who had made an attempt, no longer behaved strangely, but he proactively sought to investigate the Rose Redemption mural.

As usual, the exploratory team entered the underground hall with the altar and the deity statue. They found the obviously strange little boy, Jack.

After a similar conversation, Derrick once again saw the human face that had been pieced together with the facial features of other people.

Now experienced, he didn’t take any actions which could agitate the boy. He lowered his voice and said to Demon Hunter Colin, “Your Excellency, the face on his chest is very similar to the angel in the mural above us. It’s the angel with silver hair whose feet are above a river that is connected from mouth to source. Yes, the mural which is labeled ‘Rose Redemption’ at the corner.” Colin was taken aback at first before he frowned.

As he paid attention and consoled Jack, he sized up Derrick from the corner of his eye.

After a few seconds of silence, he said with a suppressed voice, “Due to you mentioning this matter, you made me think of certain things.”

Without waiting for Derrick to ask, he continued, “We’ve been studying this mural for a very long period of time and only believe that it depicts an angel leading a group of ascetics on a pilgrimage. And perhaps this group’s name is Rose Redemption.

“The river, that runs from source to mouth, represents a cycle, and our interpretation of it is that this pilgrimage takes place over and over again.

“And now it may be that it is used to identify the angel.

“That’s the idea you gave me, as Amon used to hide in your body.”

“Why?” Derrick was at a loss.

Demon Hunter Colin stared at Jack and said, “The worm left behind by Amon had the symbol of time, and a circular river is often related to fate. Putting the two together, it reminded me of a few books that mentioned something that I’m unsure of their credibility.

“When the Lord that created everything, the omnipotent and omniscient God, cast his attention on this world, ‘He’ had many angels around him. Among them were leaders of the angels, ‘Kings of Angels’ that were closest to being a god. There were a total of eight of them, and some of ‘Their’ names have already been lost to history. There are still records of others, perhaps simple or detailed.

“Legend has it that the sons of god were among these eight Kings of Angels.

“Among them, two Kings of Angels had the titles ‘Angel of Time’ and ‘Angel of Fate.’”

Derrick was immediately enlightened as he asked for confirmation, “You believe that Amon is the Angel of Time and that the mural is depicting the Angel of Fate?”

“I can’t be sure for now. Only the title Angel of Time has been passed down. As for the Angel of Fate, the records are relatively detailed...” Colin suddenly took a deep breath.

Immediately, he solemnly said, “Angel of Fate, Tail-devourer Ouroboros.”

...

In the evening, within the Odora family’s underground structure.

Emlyn White looked at the iron-black coffin and said to the ancient Sanguine inside, “Lord Nibbs, I accept the Ancestor’s mission!”

Nibbs replied in his aged voice, “Very good.

“When do you want to begin? Do you have any wishes that remain unfulfilled?”

“...”

Upon hearing Lord Nibbs asking about his last wishes, Emlyn White’s calves went limp, and he almost regretted it.

He stiffened his neck and said, “There’s no need!

“We can begin now.”

Chapter 467: The Delayed Response

The iron-black coffin with its strange patterns lay quietly in the center, and there seemed to be hidden shockwaves in the air that seemed to be silently colliding.

Emlyn White stood in the corner and lit the candles according to the normal ritual procedures, burning the essential oils and corresponding herbal powders.

A dense and unsteady atmosphere emanated, and after recalling the requirements of "artificial sleepwalking," Emlyn lowered his head, began to enter Cogitation, and repeated the honorific name of The Fool.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck."

...

Amidst his monotone voice, Emlyn gradually entered a magical state. His body felt relaxed and reserved. It felt like he was in deep sleep, but his spirituality was light and energetic as it constantly spread outwards.

At this moment, he had a feeling that he was continuously drifting upwards.

In the ancient palace above the gray fog, Klein was sitting at the end of the long bronze table, tapping his fingers on the rippling light screen to his side. He was expressionlessly watching the praying figure in amusement.

Although it was vague, Klein could tell at a glance that it was Vampire Emlyn White.

Very courageous, having the drive akin to buying a doll... Klein sighed and didn't respond.

He had previously tried to divine the purpose of the Sanguines, but he was unable to obtain any effective revelations. The only thing he was sure of was that it had nothing to do with the Aurora Order.

This piqued Klein's curiosity, but he wouldn't take the risk of responding to Emlyn White when a lofty Sanguine was beside Emlyn.

He didn't know if he could grasp traces of the mysterious space above the gray fog and threaten it like Blasphemer Amon. He had no intention to confirm it since he was dealing with an avatar of Amon back then. Yet, he was now facing a powerful Sanguine's true body.

There's no need to take risks on matters of no importance, even if I want to know the real purpose of the Sanguines... And it's not like there's no other way... Klein looked at Emlyn White in his state of "artificial sleepwalking." He said to himself with a smile, "I can delay my response..."

He planned to wait until tomorrow or the day after. He would suddenly respond when Emlyn White was without protection and when the Sanguine had given up!

However, there was a premise, which was to first use divination to confirm the degree of danger.

...

"Tail Devourer... Just like that river?" Derrick Berg suddenly thought of something.

Demon Hunter Colin solemnly nodded.

"Yes.

"It means that we may have stepped into a river that runs from its mouth to source, preventing our departure.

"Fortunately, this should only be remnants of that Angel of Fate's power. 'He' isn't hiding here."

No, it's definitely certain, and it has long since been the case... Derrick silently said to himself.

At this moment, Colin took out a dark red metal tube. He unscrewed the cap and gulped it down.

His light blue eyes quickly turned lighter, tinged with silver. In the end, his pupils seemed to turn vertical, reflecting Jack's figure.

A few sparks of silver light lit up in his eyes. They circled or collided at random in an extremely intense manner.

Ding!

Demon Hunter Colin first stabbed his sword into the ground, and with a flip of his hand, he pulled out his other sword, smearing it with golden, sun-like oil.

Noticing this action, Jack's expression immediately changed, as if he was shrouded in a thick shadow.

Before he could open his mouth, Demon Hunter Colin moved. He pulled out his sword from the ground, leaving behind a blurry figure.

The golden and silver light shone brightly, illuminating the entire underground hall. The light before the little boy was the most intense.

After a mournful scream, the darkness once again shrouded the altar.

Jack stood in his original spot, without taking even a step. However, the face on his chest had disappeared, leaving behind only a hole where his pulsating internal organs could be seen.

A few meters to Jack's side, Demon Hunter Colin genuflected, his two swords hanging down at an angle.

In front of him, the face was torn apart, reduced to scattered eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

These organs spasmed and bounced like electric shocks, and soon they were still, rotting rapidly like they were supposed to.

In an instant, Derrick felt an invisible, aqueous barrier around him silently shatter.

Almost at the same time, he seemed to have left the swift river and returned to the bank.

Looking at the gloomy underground hall and the upside-down deity statue, and at Jack, who had a distorted expression and had fainted due to the pain, Derrick felt a sense of joy and relief.

He knew that he and the others had finally escaped the cycle of repeating their lives.

Derrick was well aware that although the final solution didn't seem complicated, it might've taken dozens or hundreds of repeated attempts to find the clues and solution, without knowing any clues or the problem beforehand.

In the process, the slightest carelessness could lead to death, and Derrick had no way of knowing if a life that was lost could experience a redo, or if they would still "revive" by the bonfire but would end up dead after escaping this predicament.

What's even more serious is that people would always repeat the same choice, which was to say that they wouldn't be able to discover the problem in the first place. Without the corresponding memories and experience, they wouldn't detect any abnormalities even if it was the thousandth time, and they would completely lose themselves in the circular river until they reach the end of their lives due to the normal flow of time in the outside world.

At the thought of such a possibility, Derrick thanked Mr. Fool wholeheartedly for restoring his memory and giving him a hint.

Turning his head to the side, he saw that Joshua and the other members of the exploratory team didn't show any abnormal reactions as they checked the surrounding area in a way that was similar to the sixth exploration.

Perhaps it will only be after returning to the City of Silver that they would realize that they've lost a part of their lives from the difference in dates... Derrick thought silently.

At this moment, Demon Hunter Colin stood up, walked back to the boy's side, and took out another small metal bottle. He then poured the thick black liquid inside onto the boy's empty chest.

The liquid quickly condensed into a translucent membrane, sticking to the wound and stopping the flow of blood.

"Haim, Joshua, the both of you are in charge of him," Colin suppressed his throbbing hand and ordered in a low voice.

To him, this was the City of Silver's hope for ridding the curse and defeating the prophecy of the apocalypse!

Phew... Derrick wanted to covertly thank The Fool, but he realized that there was no corresponding prayer gesture.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

The sumptuous dinner glistened under the light of the candles in an alluring manner.

Unlike what was imagined in the newspapers and magazines, the dinner for a great aristocratic family wasn't serious, and there was no need for silence.

This was a rare occasion for family members to gather together. While eating, they would casually chat about a variety of relaxed topics in order to communicate and solidify their relationship.

Audrey sliced a piece a steak which was produced from her ranch, observed Earl Hall's expression, and, without hiding her curiosity, she asked, "Father, did something happen to Prince Edessak recently?"

If nothing had happened, then her plan was to pretend that she had heard irresponsible rumors that didn't correspond to reality. It wasn't uncommon for this to happen among the aristocracy.

Earl Hall paused, raised his eyebrows, and asked, "What did you hear?"

There really is something! Gleaning information from her father's reaction, Audrey replied with a faint smile, "Some rumors, but they seem to be true?"

Earl Hall rubbed his temples and said, "It's not a very serious matter.

"Audrey, I know what you're thinking, so I don't have to hide it from you. This involves a relatively ordinary scandal of the royal family. To put it simply, Prince Edessak has fallen in love with a commoner girl.

"This led to the death of an aristocratic descendant. The royal family has blocked the spread of this matter, not wanting to cause too much of a commotion."

His wife took a sip of champagne and said, “It seems he isn’t mature enough.”

Mother is being very tactful with her criticism... It does sound suspicious... Has Prince Edessak really gotten himself involved in a dangerous situation that would bring about terrible changes to Backlund? Audrey put on a look of sudden understanding and said with a smile, “This makes me wonder, why would the story of freedom and love involve the death of an aristocratic descendant?”

Hibbert Hall kept his head lowered while slicing the tender steak and guessed with great interest, “It reminds me of the complicated love stories that are so common among the believers of the Lord of Storms. It’s very common to fight for honor and for a lady.”

“It’s a tradition that has been placed into a museum,” Earl Hall denied his eldest son’s statement.

Audrey seized the opportunity and thoughtfully said, “I don’t think Prince Edessak is that kind of person, and rumors have already proliferated... Maybe that’s not what they really want to cover up.”

“Perhaps not...” Earl Hall ruminated over these words, unconsciously frowning.

Knowing when to stop, Audrey didn’t say anything else, and she naturally led the conversation in a different direction.

She planned on “probing” her other noble friends about the matter. As a girl that Prince Edessak had once courted, it was absolutely normal for her to want to know the details of the matter. Whether it was curiosity or indignation, they were enough to motivate people to make such an attempt.

...

Being unable to maintain a state of “artificial sleepwalking” for long, Emlyn White returned to reality in exhaustion. Opening his eyes, he stared at the iron-black coffin, then he said with a mixture of relief and disappointment, “Lord Nibbs, there’s no response.”

After a long moment of silence, Nibbs finally said in a rather hoarse voice, “Okay.

“Stay here tonight to prevent any accidents from happening.” “Alright!” Emlyn didn’t try to insist otherwise.

He spent the night in worry and trepidation, but the night was so serene and unremarkable. It silently faded only when Backlund’s rare winter sunshine scattered across the window.

“What bad weather,” Emlyn left Odora’s villa, lowered his hat, and mumbled while he got onto a rental carriage.

His destination was the Harvest Church south of the bridge.

After the carriage continued steadily for some time, Emlyn’s vision suddenly blurred and he saw an endless gray fog.

Then, to his amazement, he found himself in a mysterious and majestic palace, sitting at a long, mottled bronze table.

At the very end of the long table, there was a figure shrouded in a thick gray fog, looking down at him from above.

For a moment, Emlyn White was stiff and his mind was blank, like a marble statue sitting there.

Then, he heard the figure leisurely sitting in the thick gray fog indifferently ask, “Why did you pray to me?”

Emlyn’s mind buzzed and he blurted out, “It’s a revelation from my Ancestor. ‘She’ told us through a dream that the apocalypse is approaching and that we need to make preparations. And I am key in this matter. My mission was to pray to The Fool!”

Hearing the undisguised and detailed response, Klein, who had prepared his answers, was at quite a loss on where to begin. This vampire, Emlyn White, had explained everything he wanted to know.

A revelation from the Ancestor... Didn’t the ancient goddess Lilith perish in the Second Epoch, long before the Cataclysm, and have her authority taken back by the Creator? It was precisely because of this that quite a number of vampires tried to pray to the Primordial Moon, resulting in an extremely tragic outcome... Moreover, Mr. Door had also mentioned that the “The Moon” card is empty, indicating that, on the one hand, the Primordial Moon is most likely the embodiment of some other deity or powerful devil, while on the other hand, it indirectly proves that the ancient goddess Lilith has lost her Sequence 0 position, which is generally equivalent to dying... Klein instantly connected the dots.

He originally imagined that “Lilith,” who responded to the Sanguine’s prayers on particular matters, was a relic from the ancient goddess, such as the “Uniqueness” of “The Moon” pathway. Thus, it would be rigid, passive, and extremely restrictive, but now, its initiative of providing a revelation had overturned his guess.

Two possibilities. One is that Lilith is being impersonated by another deity who has occupied a key point ahead of time, preventing any opponents from reaching Sequence 0 of The Moon’s pathway. In essence, the entity doesn’t care about the Sanguine, and the provided revelation is a kind of test. The greatest suspect is the Goddess who had snatched the title of Lady of Crimson, but “She’s” already

Sequence 0, corresponding to "The Star" in the Cards of Blasphemy. Why would she covet "The Moon?" Is it to foil the plans of her enemy?

The second possibility is that the ancient goddess hasn't fully perished. As long as no other powerhouse has become Sequence 0 in the Moon pathway, "She" is able to use a unique and incomprehensible method to continue surviving, waiting for a chance to make her return, just like the Black Emperor card's description. And perhaps the Goddess had taken the title of Lady of Crimson to foil this situation to a certain extent...

Going by this logic, Lilith's recent apocalyptic revelation is "Her" struggle to revive after years of preparation. And The Fool plays a key role in "Her" revelation. If that's true, then in a certain way, it's an invitation for "cooperation"... But I'm just a Sequence 6 Beyonder, so how am I to cooperate with a yet-to-disappear ancient goddess?

Let Emlyn White join the Tarot Club? The Sanguine are a race with a long lifespan. They have existed since the Second Epoch and must know quite a number of secrets... However, that would be me taking quite a risk. Yes, it would be possible to divine whether or not to pull Emlyn into each gathering ahead of time...

Yes, there was a similar apocalyptic prophecy in the Sights in the Spirit World from Yellow Light Venithan. "He" also pointed out that the Abraham family's curse would be removed by an Apprentice who has the help of a hidden existence. This matches Miss Magician's present stage. She is an Apprentice who has received the help of me, The Fool... That's rather interesting. Has every high-level being that's good at prophecies realized that the apocalypse is unavoidable and have seen The Fool's existence and his possible effects?

One thought after another flashed through Klein's mind, but his expression didn't change at all.

He leaned back in his chair and smiled leisurely.

"What did your Ancestor ask you to pray to me for?"

The calm voice pulled Emlyn out of his stupor, and he shook his head in a slightly dazed manner.

“I don’t know...”

At this moment, Klein saw the stars behind Emlyn’s chair shift quickly, turning into the symbol of the crimson moon.

As expected, the Beyonder pathway of the descendants of the ancient goddess, Lilith, points towards the “Moon”... Klein chuckled and said, “In a situation with the seven orthodox gods and so many secret existences, why would your Ancestor think that I would be the key to the apocalypse?”

The Fool’s attitude finally made Emlyn White calm down, realizing that he had encountered an incredible event. He had been forcefully pulled into a magical place by a hidden existence! *“He” is The Fool...”He” isn’t actually angry... Is it because I represent the Ancestor? I, Emlyn White, am indeed special. I was mentioned by the Ancestor, and I received a response from The Fool...* With this in mind, Emlyn couldn’t help but sit up straighter before saying in deliberation, “Honorable Mr. Fool, the revelation provided by the Ancestor is this. I, Emlyn White, will become the key in saving the Sanguine and clinching victory against the apocalypse. And all of this will begin from my praying to you.”

The meaning behind his words was: *the key to the apocalypse isn’t you, but me!*

This fellow has such a “eighth-grader syndrome [1]*” side to him... That’s right. He has always been very arrogant and feels selfimportant...* Klein lampooned silently with a popular phrase from the past.

Amused, he said, “The same question, why me and not the seven orthodox gods or the other hidden entities?”

“...I don’t know.” Emlyn shook his head honestly.

Klein thought for a moment, then he deliberately said, “Actually, I think I understand your ancestor’s intentions. ‘She’ wishes that, with my help, you’re able to grow into a true high-level entity and save the Sanguine when the apocalypse happens.”

“Grow?” Emlyn said in puzzlement, “As you know, us Sanguine have no way of growing on our own. Only through special ceremonies will we gain the bestowment of our elders and relics of the Ancestor that allow our advancement.”

Indeed, it has to be in accordance with the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation... In other words, there have to be other ways as long as the basic law is abided to... Klein chuckled.

“Your knowledge has blinded you, making you unable to see the wider world.

“Of course, this question will not be answered by me. The answer must be found by you. I will only provide you with an opportunity.”

He paused for a second, then he said in a condescending manner, “Do you wish for such an opportunity?”

Without any hesitation, Emlyn got up and bowed.

“That is what I wish for!”

Heh, where did your arrogance go when facing a hidden existence? Why is there only humility? Klein secretly lampooned as he tapped the edge of the mottled long table and said, “But you have to adhere to certain matters.”

“Please speak.” Emlyn held back his excitement.

Klein smiled and replied, “You cannot reveal anything related to me to anyone unless you gain my permission.

“This includes the Sanguine who were previously present at the ritual.”

“But...” Emlyn was somewhat unable to accept the request.

Klein asked warmly in a very certain manner, “It’s likely that Lilith didn’t get you to report to anyone afterward?”

This could be inferred from the fact that there was no prayer content in the revelation!

Li...”He” directly called the Ancestor by “Her” name... It sounds like they’re old friends... Emlyn’s heart trembled. He lowered his head and replied, “No.”

Klein said with an unperturbed smile, “This is a secret deal, which is why I responded after you were free from surveillance. Similarly, you don’t need to report this to Lilith as it will let certain people notice it.”

Seeing Emlyn nod in understanding, Klein added, “If you want to be the key to saving the Sanguine, you must suffer the pain of the corresponding thorns. For example, you will not be understood by others, be slandered, and looked down upon. You can only silently proceed forward in the darkness while being burdened by your heavy mission.”

The words that were aimed at him made Emlyn White imagine a corresponding scenario.

He, who was always mocked by his kinsmen because of his fondness of dolls, had gotten lost and entered the Harvest Church. Stained with traces of shame, he, who had never been valued and thought highly of by his elders, would silently guard his race from the corner, protecting everyone without anyone knowing...

Very soon, Emlyn, who had moved himself, respectfully replied,

“Your will will pass through the earth.”

Klein leaned back and said very lightly, “I tacitly consented to the establishment of a secret gathering, and it is held right here.

“Are you willing to join this gathering in search for the method to become powerful to save the Sanguine?” “I am!” Emlyn replied without any hesitation.

Klein nodded in satisfaction.

“Do you have any other requests?”

Emlyn was overjoyed. He said in a hurry, “Honorable Mr. Fool, I would like you to help me dispel the psychological cue in me. A bishop of the Church of Earth Mother...” “I know.” Klein calmly interrupted him.

He knows... As expected of a hidden existence... Emlyn’s head lowered again.

Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"I can help you, but what price are you willing to pay for this?"

Above the gray fog, he had a very potent Spirit Vision, and he had previously discovered that the dark-colored psychological cue within Emlyn White's Spirit Body had at some point mostly dissipated, thinning out to the point of frailty.

Klein had intended to resolve the problem by referring to the ritual used to resolve similar problems in the Book of Secrets, but the situation now led him to believe that a secret deed ritual with the Black Emperor card and the purification of the Sun Brooch would thoroughly disperse Emlyn White's psychological cue.

Price? Emlyn thought about it for a moment, but he couldn't think of anything that would interest a secret existence like The Fool.

Seeing this, Klein took the initiative to say, "I'm very interested in some of your Sanguine history. You can use that in exchange."

The Sanguine's history? After a moment's thought, Emlyn agreed.

"You can think about what you would like to describe first. Heh heh. Before that, you need to choose a code name from them." Klein conjured the unselected Major Arcana tarot cards on the surface of the long bronze table.

Emlyn White scrutinized the cards with interest and said, "The Moon.

"I choose 'The Moon' card!"

---

1. Typically used to describe early teens who have delusions of grandeur, who so desperately want to stand out that they have convinced themselves they have hidden knowledge or secret powers.

Above the gray fog, inside the palace that looked like a giant's residence.

The Moon Emlyn thought hard about what part of the Sanguine's history that he should tell The Fool.

He and the Ancestor are old friends, so "He" must know what happened before the Cataclysm, so I don't need to repeat it... In the Fourth and Fifth Epoch, the glory of the Sanguine wasn't rare, and there was a lot of history to talk about, but there was only one most important point... Emlyn quickly came up with an idea.

From what he knew, The Fool was likely an ancient god before the Cataclysm. Due to certain reasons, he didn't perish and had slept till today, gradually in the process of recovering.

This explained why no such secret existence had appeared in the Sanguine records, that had a history spanning millennia, until 'His' honorific name suddenly spread.

After some deliberation, Emlyn straightened his back and said, "After the Cataclysm, the Sanguine left the center of the historical stage of the Northern and Southern Continents and became nobles of different empires and dynasties as individuals instead of as a race. They either governed a territory or guarded a castle in a key area.

"This continued until our queen, Blood Moon Queen, Auernia, who led us out of the era of darkness, became the wife of the Trunsoest Dynasty's Night Emperor. She gathered all of the Sanguine together and the Sanguine became important supporters of the dynasty. At that time, Loen's Augustus and Feysac's Einhorn had to politely address our queen as 'Her Majesty.'

"In that era, Queen Auernia was the symbol of beauty. If there was a magic mirror that could answer questions, then the answer to 'who is the most beautiful of them all' would be her..."

The more Emlyn spoke, the prouder he became. He went from being reserved and serious to becoming extremely talkative.

A magic mirror that can answer questions; isn't that Arrodes? I wonder if there are any members of the Machinery Hivemind who were so bored out of their minds to ask the question, 'Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all'... I wonder how Arrodes will answer. Klein sat in the same posture, smiling as his thoughts wandered.

After droning on and on, Emlyn's expression turned serious.

"All of this shattered in the War of the Four Emperors. The Night Emperor perished, along with the queen. The Sanguine suffered a terrible blow, and while trying to reap the final fruits of victory, the four noble families—Augustus, Einhorn, Sauron, and Castiya—split the empire, destroying the royal family which was lacking in high-level beings. The Sanguine had no choice but to retreat to an uninhabited mountain to hide in the shadows so as to maintain the continuation of our race."

Just as I expected... The seven gods were already the seven gods during the War of the Four Emperors... Klein thought of the statue of the six gods in the Tudor ruins.

"Fortunately, the seven gods were fractured back then and the four countries attacked each other. After paying a certain price, we finally escaped the disaster." At this moment, Emlyn was in a rare state of being roused.

He looked at Klein and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool, do you have the time to listen to my description of Blood Moon Queen's deeds and the glory the Sanguine used to have? That will be a heavy tome formed by pages of glorious expositions. I can repeat everything in them."

It looks like you can continue on indefinitely... I used to think that you were a vampire who liked puppets and didn't know much history. I didn't expect you to be so professional and academic... No wonder you always believed the Sanguine to be noble and are proud of it... This kind of guy who doesn't like going out really will delve into deep research into a topic he's interested in. Furthermore, vampires have a sufficiently long lifespan... Klein hesitated, prepared to decline Emlyn's offer in a euphemistic manner.

Although he had no lack of interest in the history, time didn't allow him to listen to them all.

"It's enough." Klein smiled and said, "I like a fair and equal exchange, so I won't let you say anything without reaping rewards. In the future, when you have the chance, you can use your relevant history to trade for what you want from me." "...Alright." Emlyn felt lost for a moment.

This was the first time he had the opportunity to tell someone else about the glory of the Sanguine.

Normally, in order to hide his identity, he wouldn't be able to show off to the humans. As for the members of the Sanguine, all of them knew what needed to be known, and he wasn't in charge of educating the newborns.

Klein didn't say anything else and resumed his supercilious attitude.

"Alright, you can go back now."

A dark red light immediately lit up in front of Emlyn White's eyes, quickly devouring him.

After a short period of dizziness, he found that he was still sitting in the rental carriage.

Soon after, he saw an illusory goatskin parchment and gained the knowledge of how to request help from The Fool via a secret deed ritual.

When I'm free in the afternoon, I'll immediately hold the ritual at home and ask Mr. Fool to dispel my psychological cue... Emlyn was suddenly excited.

He waited until the carriage arrived at the Harvest Church before calming down and paying for the ride.

After entering the cathedral, he was relieved to see that Bishop Utravsky was there preaching to the few believers of the Church. He no longer felt as vexed as he usually felt and felt rather relaxed.

In this state, he suddenly thought of something.

Father Utravsky has never seemed to stop me from finding a way to dispel the psychological cues... What exactly is on his mind...

...

East Borough, in a greasy coffee shop.

Klein, who arrived at the scheduled time, was enjoying wheat bread with fresh pea lamb stew while he listened to Old Kohler's report of the information he had gathered over the past week.

It was a pity that there was no valuable information inside.

When Old Kohler was done, Klein thought for a moment, then he pulled out two pounds worth of bills and pushed them over.

"You already paid me just now!" Old Kohler jumped in shock and waved his hands in front of him.

Klein chuckled and said, "Within this week, I'll be heading south for a holiday. After a year of hard work, it's time to rest for a while.

"I might take two to three weeks before I return, so I'll pay you in advance. Heh heh, don't forget to help me gather information."

"Okay, okay!" Old Kohler accepted the notes with a mixture of joy and gratitude.

At this moment, he had already thought of how to spend the New Year.

He planned to buy the cured ham he had been reluctant to buy and match it with his bread.

I really can't stand the wait... Thank you, Detective Moriarty! He swallowed his saliva without realizing it.

Klein picked up his hat, hesitated for a moment, and said, "You should've noticed that East Borough has been a bit chaotic recently.

"Don't take risks just to find out more information. If you notice anything wrong, immediately hide and avoid getting yourself involved."

He was rather worried about the matter surrounding Prince Edessak, so he wanted to give Old Kohler a reminder.

“I understand.” Old Kohler patted his chest and said, “I’m very timid. I won’t take the risk.” “Very good,” Klein praised.

Then he remembered the laundry maid, Liv, and her two daughters, Freja and Daisy, who loved to read, and wanted to change their fates before he said whilst in thought, “Watch out for Liv’s family. Don’t let them be bullied. If there are any outbreaks in East Borough, take them to a safe place.”

“Outbreaks... You mean the workers’ resistance?” Old Kohler asked, puzzled.

“More or less,” Klein answered vaguely.

This was the limit of what he could reveal; otherwise, it would be very easy for him to be suspected by others or the Sealed

Artifact itself.

...

In a room with large and small dolls, Emlyn White came home at noon and sat in his chair, enjoying the gloom created by the curtains.

He looked around and clenched his fists.

“I’ll cheer for myself!”

With that, he rummaged for materials with spirituality and began to write the honorific name of The Fool, as well as the corresponding symbols and magic labels.

After some hustling and bustling, he tried the secret deed ritual. His spirituality gradually dissipated, as if he had arrived at an immeasurably high place.

Vaguely, he saw countless shadows of ineffable shapes, seven colors of light that seemed to contain immense knowledge, and the grayish-white fog that stood above everything.

Above the boundless gray fog, there was an ancient palace that was impossible to see clearly. Seated inside the palace was a person shrouded in gray fog.

Then, Emlyn saw a figure of golden majesty and holiness, as well as black wings that blotted out the sky behind it.

He didn't even have time to count the number of pairs of mysterious wings before he felt himself quickly floating upwards, making contact with that golden figure.

"Ah!"

He screamed miserably as he held his head and rolled on the ground, emitting green smoke from his body.

It took a while for Emlyn to calm down, and then he heard the deep voice of The Fool echo in his ears.

"Your psychological cue has been lifted."

Is this what it feels like to dispel a psychological cue? It's really painful... Emlyn sat on the floor, panting, his neatly combed hair falling in disarray.

Atop the gray fog, Klein thoughtfully nodded and said to himself, "Indeed, the Sun Brooch's purifying and dispelling effects can also harm vampires."

He had calculated in advance that the "sunlight" needed to remove the weakened psychological cue wouldn't severely damage Emlyn, so he couldn't be bothered switching to a more complicated approach. And now, the result was indeed consistent with his expectations.

After taking care of this matter, Klein took off the topaz pendant on his left wrist and planned to perform a divination.

"It is suitable to head to the Red Rose Manor this afternoon."

After chanting seven times in his mind, he opened his eyes and saw the spirit pendulum standing still and not spinning.

The difficulty of divining something that involves a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a corresponding powerhouse is too high. I'm unable to obtain any effective revelations... Klein sighed, knowing the gist of the matter.

Then, he started to divine if it would be suitable to head to Red Rose Manor tomorrow afternoon, but he received the same signs of failure as an outcome.

It's always said that divination isn't omnipotent, and it has now been proven... I have to decide on my own... I have to take this step; otherwise, there's no way for me to leave the stage unnoticed so as to go behind the scenes... The earlier the better, I can't delay it; otherwise, this matter might become completely impossible to recover from... As his thoughts churned, Klein came to a decision.

He immediately returned to the real world, put on his doublebreasted frock coat and half top hat, and he walked out of 15 Minsk Street, heading for Prince Edessak's Red Rose Manor.

Chapter 470: Name

Outside Red Rose Manor, Klein walked out of the carriage whilst carrying his cane.

He closed his eyes and calmed himself as he looked at the reduniformed soldiers standing guard at the door.

Since Sealed Artifact 0-08 has been making coincidences to stop the woman with the sapphire ring from meeting me, there shouldn't be any exception today. There's no need for me to worry about running into her. As long as I fool Prince Edessak with my acting, everything would be fine... Klein thought quickly and walked towards the entrance of the manor.

After being searched and handing in the gun holster and revolver, he followed a valet's lead and walked across the gray slate road, past a fountain spewing clear spring water, and entered the main house. They arrived at the second floor and arrived outside the room that was supposed to be a solarium according to the layout.

During this entire process, Klein had his heart in his mouth, worrying that something unexpected would happen. He was afraid that the situation would develop in the worst possible manner.

Knock. Knock. Knock. After knocking gently on the door, a valet approached the door and whispered, "Detective Moriarty has arrived."

After a full ten seconds of silence, a heavy voice came from inside the room.

"His Highness has invited him in."

The door creaked open and warmth spread outwards, with a temperature that was warmer than the hallway.

Under the watchful gaze of the two tall guards, Klein stepped onto the thick, patterned yellow carpet.

He took a few steps forward, skirting the cabinet that separated the inside from the outside, and he saw Prince Edessak sitting by the full-length windows, enjoying the rare winter sun of Backlund.

The round, impressionable face didn't have the slightest trace of a smile, and this naturally created a solemn and repressed atmosphere.

Because of the combination of the elegant fireplace and the metal pipes, the room was warmer than late spring. Prince Edessak wasn't wearing a coat, and his upper body was covered with a white shirt with cuffs which resembled blooming flowers and a pale yellow vest.

Seeing this, Klein was actually secretly relieved, because the woman wearing the sapphire ring wasn't accompanying the Prince.

Thus, he quickly stepped forward and bowed.

Edessak held a steaming cup of black tea in his hand and didn't invite Klein to take a seat.

He maintained his previous expression and asked in a deep voice, "Any results from your investigation?"

"No, my divinations, my spirit channeling, my interviews, my investigations all tell me that Talim died of a heart attack," Klein said with a heavy, painful expression with obvious signs of selfblame. "I'm just too weak in every aspect. Your Highness, you should hire a stronger and more powerful helper."

Why don't you get someone better... He added silently inwardly.

It was only then that Edessak seemed to clearly notice Detective Sherlock Moriarty's face. He felt as if he had aged considerably, as though he had been unable to sleep at ease for a long time.

It wasn't an illusion, because Klein had used his Faceless powers before he left to adjust the state of his face, making his skin look dry and lusterless. He made his beard appear messy and his eye bags bigger, darker, and more obvious.

Edessak was silent for a moment before he put down the white porcelain cup with a golden inlaid rim.

"I understand. It's indeed like forcing a square peg in a round hole...

"I will have someone else follow up on the matter. Prepare an investigation report and don't leave anything out."

Alright! Klein inwardly clenched his fist and quickly took out a folded piece of paper from his pocket.

"Your Highness, there's no need for you to wait, as I always have the habit of recording things in writing."

After instructing the attendants to take the report, Prince Edessak casually flipped through it and put it aside.

"Is there anything else you need?"

"No, Your Royal Highness, please allow me to take my leave. Ah, right, I will be heading south for some time; I want to use the warm sunlight there to melt the pain in my heart." Klein sighed in response.

"It's a New Year's custom of many in Loen." Prince Edessak nodded slightly and turned to Funkel, the old butler. "Send Detective Moriarty out and get him a carriage."

The nearest town to Red Rose Manor is a 15 to 20 minutes walk. I'll have to hire a carriage when I get there.

"Yes, Your Highness," the old butler bowed and said politely.

Klein didn't let down his guard and quickly took his leave.

He followed the old butler all the way to the entrance of the manor and took back his underarm gun holster and his weapon.

Less than a minute later, he was seated in a Red Rose Manor carriage.

He leaned against the carriage wall and watched the manor turn smaller as the distance grew. Klein relaxed and let out a long breath, letting his hanging heart calm back down to its original position.

He knew that he had left the center of the stage.

After that, it's time to bid farewell to Backlund and head south, a complete curtain call... After that, I'll change my looks and sneak back in secret... He calmly considered his subsequent plans.

Suddenly, his spirituality stirred as his spirituality tensed up as he saw the door to the carriage quickly open and then silently close!

Before he could respond, he saw a figure quickly outline itself. It was wearing a heavy black dress and had a sapphire ring on its hand.

Sapphire ring! Upon seeing this scene, Klein, who was at the juncture of a flight or fight response, narrowed his eyes and sat back down, not daring to act rashly.

This was a terrifying person who possessed a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or was a demigod of a similar level!

This... It's really true that the more afraid you are of something happening, the higher the chances are of it happening... 0-08 or something else, what happened to the coincidences you create? Klein's spirit and body instantly tensed up as he could only watch helplessly as the figure appeared in front of him.

The lady's age was completely different from her dressing style. She looked about eighteen or nineteen, had a round face, slender eyes, and a gentle and refined temperament. Deep down, she was sweet and was an outstandingly gorgeous beauty.

She... Klein was surprised for a moment, before immediately recognizing her as he blurted out,

"Trissy!"

Isn't this the fellow who had gone from being Instigator Tris to Witch Trissy?

How did she go from being wanted to becoming Prince Edessak's woman?

How did she, a member of a the Demoness Sect, end up by Prince Edessak's side?

And she even has a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a mystical item of a similar level!

When he looked again carefully, he saw that there was something different about Trissy. Her facial features, which weren't outstanding alone, were softer and more delicate, but when placed together, they were stunning.

Hearing his surprise, Trissy became happy instead of being alarmed. She revealed a sweet smile and said, “You know me...

“I knew you know me!

“A detective with Beyonder powers definitely pays special attention to the wanted posters!”

He, eh—she looks very happy... Klein cautiously asked with doubt and caution, “What do you want?”

He clearly remembered that the person before him wasn’t a good person. Tris had single-handedly created the tragedy of Alfalfa via instigation, while Trissy had caused the deaths of many innocent civilians in Tingen City.

Trissy pursed her lips into a smile and said, “Very simple. Quickly report me to the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, or the Machinery Hivemind! Get them to come here and capture me!”

Calling the cops on yourself? Th-this transvestite, eh—this woman must be insane! Klein was a bit at a loss.

He soon figured out the meaning behind her message: Trissy would rather be locked up behind Chanis Gate than stay at Red Rose Manor. She’s trying her hardest to get out of here!

Simply put, she believes that this place is more dangerous and more despair-inducing than being caught by the Nighthawks and Mandated Punishers... Klein tried his best to control his expression and asked in a deep voice, “What are you afraid of?”

Trissy stood dazed for a second before she widened her eyes and said with her unfocused eyes, “There’s someone manipulating my life. There are always coincidences that horrify me after they happen.

“And I’m becoming less and less like myself.”

Saying this, the corners of her mouth curled up as she said, “Can you imagine? Being someone who loves those shy and cute maids, can you imagine the pain when I wake up in the morning in the arms of a naked man?”

I can; that's why it's best to stay away from being an Assassin or Witch... Klein couldn't help but imagine such a scene, and his heart palpitated for a moment.

Trissy continued with a self-deprecating smile, "I thought that by working hard to advance, to become 'Pleasure,' that I would be able to free myself from that weird state. Hence, I sought people to help me search for the corresponding Beyonder ingredients, but the outcome only turned worse.

"Sometimes, I forget a lot of things, but they end up really happening. I endured the disgust, seduced Talim, and tried to get him to help me escape. Who knew that I ended up killing him with a curse without me even realizing it... Do you believe that?

"Heh heh, they even changed my name. They wanted me to completely abandon my past self. No! Absolutely not!

"They thought I could only overcome the coincidences for a short period of time and that I would soon get back on track. Humph, it was just an impression I deliberately created for them, so I have managed to meet you, Mr. Detective!"

Pleasure... Demoness... Ingredients... Klein suddenly remembered that in the Beyonder gathering held by Old Mister Eye of Wisdom, Isengard Stanton, there had been a person who had requested to purchase the main ingredients of the Demoness of Pleasure potion. With him being aware of the formula, he instantly noticed it on the spot, but he had chosen to ignore it.

He gradually forgot about the matter with time.

So that was Trissy's helper! Was she already by Prince Edessak's side back then? Why do I somehow feel that her present smile looks so miserable but beautiful... A Demoness of Pleasure is sick... Klein took a breath, his thoughts in a jumble.

As he was organizing his thoughts, he asked casually, "What did they change your name to?"

Trissy furrowed her beautiful brows as she answered with a somewhat blank look in her eyes, "Trissy Cheek."

Trissy Cheek... Cheek... Cheek! Klein suddenly raised his head, his whole body turning numb once again, as stiff as a marble statue.

At this very moment, there was only one page of Roselle's diary that was madly reverberating in his mind.

"5th June. I obtained an ancient book. It actually mentions the Primordial Demoness's name...

"'Her' name is Cheek..."

Chapter 471: Klein's Preparations

Cheek...

The goosebumps on Klein's skin surfaced uncontrollably as he looked at the beautiful young lady with her misty eyes and furrowed eyebrows. The goosebumps were distinct and were accompanied with cold sweat.

At this moment, he felt as if he had returned to Tingen, back to the Blackthorn Security Company, and was about to activate his Spirit Vision to observe Megose and the baby in her womb. The fear that resulted from his instinct was so clear that it felt like a giant hand tightly gripping onto his heart.

He finally understood that the thing interfering with the gray fog and his divinations wasn't a Grade 0 Sealed Artifact or a mystical item of the same level. There was something even more terrifying hidden within Trissy's body.

The symbol of the apocalypse, the Primordial Demoness!

No, she isn't the Primordial Demoness yet. Otherwise, I would've already lost control just by being together with her, turning into a pile of squirming rotten meat!

She's in a very strange state...

Trissy's brows eased as her eyes regained their focus. As she looked at Klein, who didn't dare to move at all, she gently lifted her right hand, allowing her slender white finger to slowly slide down from the side of her body. With a bit of grievance, seduction, and malice, she laughed and said, "If you can inform the Nighthawks, the Mandated Punishers, and the Machinery Hivemind about this matter, and I happen to meet you before they arrest me, I don't mind letting you know what true pleasure

is."

Klein's gaze subconsciously followed the movement of her fingers, and all sorts of mind-blowing details surfaced in his mind.

They aren't considered big, but they are very firm... What am I thinking... What am I looking at! Is this the seductive powers of a Demoness of Pleasure? Ignoring the fact that you were once a man, even if you were a true lady, without having committed many heinous crimes in the past to lessen the psychological rejection I have, I wouldn't dare to. If you were to suddenly awaken as the Primordial Demoness, even The Fool can't handle that... Klein silently sighed, raised his head, looked at the carriage's wooden roof, and said, "Do you think that I, an ordinary Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder, would have the ability to escape the pursuit of the royal family? I think they've already discovered that something is wrong, and they're about to take action..."

Trissy felt somewhat smug that Klein didn't dare to look straight at her.

She chuckled softly and said, "I'll try to escape and divert the main pursuing force. Although the remaining ones are still very powerful, it's not impossible to deal with them.

"I believe that you will fight with all your might for the sake of your own life. You have great hope!"

With that, her figure quickly disappeared, as if someone had wiped it away with a rag.

This was different from Sharron, as it wasn't a return to a normal Wraith state, but a direct form of invisibility.

Bam!

The carriage door opened and then closed.

The sweet fragrance that remained drilled into his nose, and Klein retracted his gaze, his face sinking.

Even now, his arms were still trembling slightly, as if he had contracted some disease.

If it wasn't for his rich experience, even though he had faced the son of an evil god in the real world with a belly in between them, he, who knew what the name "Trissy Cheek" meant, wouldn't have been able to bear the terrifying pressure and would've collapsed on the spot. It

was akin to having a rubber band stretched too tightly to the point of tearing.

It seems like Trissy still doesn't know what's happening to her body. She also doesn't know the meaning behind the name "Cheek"... Klein quickly calmed his thoughts, looked out the window, estimated the distance, and counted the time.

His spiritual intuition and corresponding experience told him that doing anything in such a situation was better than nothing!

Therefore, with the danger of being silenced at hand, he was prepared to try his best to save himself!

3, 2, 1... Klein suddenly opened his eyes and snapped his fingers.

At the edge of the road, a small fire ignited on a tree with only withered branches left. The flames quickly soared into the sky.

Several matches inside his pocket, that Klein had intentionally divided up, burst into flames, and a crimson color engulfed his black attire.

His figure disappeared from the interior of the carriage, and he walked out from the flames by the roadside.

Pa! Pa! Pa! He kept snapping the fingers on his left hand repeatedly, his figure constantly flashing through the sparse, withered forest. He "rode" the flames and rapidly arrived deep in the forest which couldn't be seen from the outside.

Then, he paused and pulled out the accessory hanging around his neck.

He always knew very clearly that there were hidden elements behind this matter. Therefore, for his visit to Red Rose Manor, he abided by the principles of a Magician. He had made some preparations beforehand, such as separating his matches and carrying a number of his mystical items on him.

Among the mystical items, the Biological Poison Bottle and the Sun Brooch were involved in the Capim and Wraith incidents; therefore, out of caution, he left them above the gray fog, As for the All-Black Eye which was left behind by Marionettist Rosago, it was difficult to get past the manor guards; hence, it was met with the same treatment.

Finally, other than the three kinds of bullets—purifying bullets, demon-hunting bullets, and exorcism bullets of purification—he only brought along two mystical items.

The first was the Master Key that allowed him to pass through obstacles. The side effects of getting lost could be offset by dowsing. Furthermore, it looked like an ordinary key so it wasn't easily discovered. The other item was a key element of Klein's preparations—Azik's copper whistle.

Simply put, when he faced a danger he couldn't handle himself, he could ask for the help of a powerhouse!

After that encounter, whether I recognized Trissy or not, I am definitely on a kill list. There's a high chance that I've been targeted by 0-08. There won't be any negative effects getting Mr. Azik's help. Well, that's if 0-08 has been behind all the coincidences... Klein raised the cold ancient copper whistle and put it in his mouth, blowing on it.

Without a sound, he activated his Spirit Vision and saw the white bones that gushed out from the ground like a fountain. He saw the nearly four-meter-tall giant messenger taking form. It lowered its head and looked at him with his eye sockets burning with black flames.

That huge body gave Klein a sense of security. He took out the pen and paper he carried with him and wrote a word: "Help!"

Next, he folded the paper and stuffed it into the messenger's hanging palm.

After the messenger had disappeared, he put away the copper whistle, deliberately put on a prayer posture, and quickly chanted the honorific name of The Fool, "...Honorable Mr. Fool, my investigations have borne fruit. The woman Prince Edessak fell in love with is Witch Trissy from the Demoness Sect. She has already advanced to Demoness of Pleasure and the upper echelons have changed her name to Trissy Cheek..."

After quickly making the "report," Klein didn't bother to hide his identity and immediately took four steps counterclockwise to head above the gray fog.

Then, he retrieved the scenes of him praying, and he threw it into the crimson star symbolizing Miss Justice. He tried his best to feign a mocking tone and added in a supercilious manner that was congruent with the style of The Fool, “Cheek, hehe, that’s the true name of the Primordial Demoness...”

After doing all this, Klein immediately returned to the real world, ready to run for his life.

He had only taken a few steps when his eyes suddenly lit up.

He subconsciously raised his head and saw several meteors burning with raging flames falling from the sky, tearing through the sky and enveloping the entire forest!

“This...” At that moment, the scarlet light shone into Klein’s eyes, giving him an indomitable feeling.

He had never expected that the person he was up against would send meteorites from the sky to silence him!

...

On a yellowing notebook, a seemingly ordinary quill wrote:

“For unknown, inexplicable reasons, the Dallask meteor shower arrived at the planet two days early.

“A portion of them just happened to land in the forest where Detective Sherlock Moriarty was hiding. Yes, just happened!”

...

Tuesday afternoon, in Audrey’s study.

The teenage girl, who was about to reach adulthood, was listening intently as Mrs. Escalante explained the connection between the intersection of Spectator and Telepathist powers with mysticism psychology. Beside her feet, Susie was sitting there attentively.

Suddenly, she saw the endless gray fog and a blurry figure in a prayer position in what appeared to be a forest.

Soon after, the words reached her ears.

Prince Edessak... The Demoness Sect... Witch Trissy... Demoness of Pleasure... Trissy Cheek... Audrey automatically filtered out the irrelevant details and noticed the most important words.

So that's the reason! The person Edessak fell in love with is a Demoness... Furthermore, many of the Demonesses are transformed men... Why do I feel like laughing... Is this why he will bring danger to Backlund? Well, I have to warn Father... But what method or excuse should I use... Audrey tried her hardest to control her expression and gaze, but her mind wandered.

At this moment, she saw Mr Fool leisurely sitting at the end of the long bronze table. She heard "Him" say in a gentle tone with a hint of ridicule in his voice, "Cheek, hehe, that's the true name of the Primordial Demoness..."

The true name of the Primordial Demoness... The Primordial Demoness! As her mind buzzed, Audrey's expression instantly collapsed.

"What's wrong?" As an observant Telepathist, Escalante immediately noticed that something was wrong with Miss Audrey.

Audrey thought for a moment and didn't hide her concern as she said, "Ms. Escalante, I just remembered something bad. I should've told my parents before, but I forgot. It will lead to terrible and serious consequences."

For example, the destruction of Backlund, how few of the millions of people who live here, regardless of them being nobles, the middle class, or the poor, will survive... Audrey pursed her lips. Her concern couldn't be hidden in her sparkling, emerald-like eyes.

Escalante frowned and said, "Will it be too late to do it now?"

"It's better than not doing so. Ms. Escalante, please wait for me. No, you should leave first." Audrey entered her Spectator state and calmly made her decision.

Then she got up and left the study and went into the hallway.

Father has gone to the House of Lords... Only Mother is at home... But what should I say? Audrey frowned slightly. She didn't slow down,

nor did she increase her pace. Next to her were her personal maid and her huge dog, Susie.

Gradually, she had an idea. When she arrived at the living room where her mother was, she had already made up her mind.

Taking a light breath, Audrey felt an unusual sinking sensation on her shoulders.

Then, without hesitation, she knocked on the door.

Chapter 472: Latent Danger

Lady Caitlyn was sitting on a sofa in the activity room, with the deputy butler, butler's assistant, and the attendant of the corresponding services seated opposite her.

She was meticulous as she gave instructions on various things to take note of for the dinner banquet that night. This continued until her daughter, Audrey, came to her side.

"Mother, I have something to tell you." Audrey swept her gaze across the other people in the room.

On the way to the activity room, she had felt a slight tremor, but she didn't discover anything unusual.

Lady Caitlyn looked around and nodded.

"All of you can return later."

The activity room turned silent very quickly and even Susie was signaled by Audrey to leave.

"You should stay by my side more often and learn how to handle matters. Although you don't lack such content in your family lessons, it's still profound knowledge on how to effectively combine theory with practice," Lady Caitlyn, who looked to be in her early thirties despite being in her fifties, smiled and educated her daughter. "Alright, my little angel, what is it?"

Audrey tried to produce the elegant smile she'd practiced in etiquette class, but she found herself with a heavy, nervous smile.

She pursed her dry lips and directly said, "Mother, I've been hiding something from you and Father."

"Oh?" Lady Caitlyn tilted her head, waiting for a further explanation.

Audrey's words were a little staccato at first, but then they immediately became smooth and fluent.

"I... I'm already a Beyonder, the kind of person who possesses miraculous powers by consuming a potion."

The blonde Lady Caitlyn raised her eyebrows lightly and answered without any hint of surprise, “I know.

“Both your father and I know about it.”

“Huh?” Audrey was momentarily at a loss as to how to continue.

Lady Caitlyn covered her mouth and laughed.

“You took so many mystical ingredients from the vault, and you are so naive to think that your father and I didn’t notice?

“By your father’s side, in this villa, and in the fief of our family, there’s no lack of Beyonders. They may be a result of a simple employment relationship, or they may have been assigned by the Church of the Goddess, or they may have been members of the Hall family. His Majesty has tacitly agreed to such matters, and we have also tacitly consented to your little adventures... Sigh, you will eventually grow up and mature. Your father and I will never be able to protect you under our wings forever. You will have to face certain matters alone, so having additional powers to aid you as a trump card is good too.

“Yes, according to the general knowledge that I’m aware of, the initial stages shouldn’t be that dangerous, and advancing will require one to two years, or maybe even three years. So, your father and I aren’t too anxious, and we intended to wait until you become an adult to give you a word of warning so that you can stop at your present state.”

No, Mother, your general knowledge is wrong. You don’t know the acting method. If I have all the ingredients, then I can become a Sequence 7 Psychiatrist before the new year... Moreover, I do not wish to stop. The death of Duke Negan has made me understand that the world isn’t as stable and peaceful as I thought it was. I want to have the power to protect all of you at critical moments...

Mr. Fool is gradually recovering, and evil gods are making repeated attempts to descend. Although I’m still immature and lack the necessary knowledge, I can sense the hidden, indescribable dangers from these matters... Audrey had always known that she couldn’t avoid the problem of taking Beyonder ingredients from the vault, but she thought that perhaps by chance, her parents weren’t aware of the

specific effects of those items. At most, they would suspect that she was getting deeper and deeper into her mysticism enthusiast circle.

After releasing the burden in her heart, she paid no notice to her mother's exhortation and said, "Mother, I later joined a secret organization, one that's more academic and doesn't worship evil gods. Please forgive me for not being able to say its name and details, but I've already made an oath."

Without waiting for her mother to ask, she cut to the chase.

"I received word today that the commoner girl who Prince Edessak has fallen in love with is a Demoness. I don't know what kind of plot they are plotting."

The first two sentences of hers didn't contain any absolute connection. The former referred to the Psychology Alchemists, while the source of the latter was the Tarot Club, which was Mr. Fool.

Through this arrangement of sentences, every word she said was true, one that could be confirmed through divination. However, it would make people believe that her news came from the secret organization known as the Psychology Alchemists.

The smile on Caitlyn's face gradually disappeared as she solemnly asked, "Demoness?"

She didn't know much about the mysterious world, but the very word was enough to make her sense the evil and become uneasy.

Audrey quickly nodded.

"Yes, a Demoness of Pleasure.

"And what scares me even more is that her name is Trissy Cheek."

"What's wrong with that?" her mother asked, puzzled.

"A member of that organization has seen the name Cheek in an ancient book," Audrey said the lie that she had already planned for. Whether it was her tone, her words, the details of her expression, or her body language, they were all flawless. "In the Fourth Epoch or earlier, it's a name that belonged to the Primordial Demoness."

Immediately after, she gravely added, “That’s an evil goddess!”

Lady Caitlyn didn’t understand what the Primordial Demoness meant, but she knew exactly what an evil goddess meant.

She couldn’t sit still any longer and quickly replied with a question, “Are you sure?”

“...I’m not sure.” Audrey didn’t doubt Mr. Fool at all, but she couldn’t say so openly. “No matter what, I think it’s necessary to seek the royal family, no—get the Beyonders of the Church of the Goddess to confirm the matter. If it involves an evil goddess, it’s always the right decision to be cautious.”

Caitlyn looked up at her daughter in surprise.

“...Audrey, you’ve grown up.”

If it weren’t for the urgency of the matter, Audrey would’ve pretended to be reserved upon hearing such praise. She would first modestly wheedle, then return to her room in glee. She might even twirl into a dance.

But now, she couldn’t care about that at all. She quickly let her worry and nervousness surface on her expression.

“Mother, can you help me hide the truth? I heard that the Beyonders of the Church and the royal family abhor secret organizations that aren’t a part of them. Well, you can say that it was news which Father received. He should have plenty of channels for information.”

Caitlyn stood up and gave her daughter a hug.

“Don’t worry, neither your father nor I will involve you in this.

“Your father won’t be back until evening. I’ll first let the hidden guards appear, pretend that he sent a message, then I’ll get the Church of the Goddess to send Beyonders to protect our family.” “Alright!” Audrey replied happily.

At that moment, she finally breathed a sigh of relief. She was exhausted from maintaining her prolonged high level of tension.

...

Looking at the few burning meteors crashing down at a high speed and enveloping the whole forest, Klein actually had the thought of waiting helplessly for his doom in despair.

Even if he continuously used Flaming Jump, it would be impossible for him to escape the forest and the dangerous epicenter before the meteor shower landed. Moreover, the weak body of a Beyonder from the Seer pathway didn't allow the possibility of him withstanding a head-on meteor strike.

Even a zombie that wouldn't be wounded by a revolver would immediately be turned into minced meat under such an "attack." Moreover, it would become charred black... Flaming Jump... The yellow-white light shone into the depths of his eyes, quickly giving Klein, who had not given up, an idea.

In a situation that was depicted in seconds, he didn't hesitate. He did whatever that came to his mind.

Pa!

After silently calculating the distance, Klein snapped his fingers and ignited all the remaining matches in the matchbox.

A streak of crimson red light soared into the sky, quickly enveloping his figure within it.

Klein disappeared without a sound, appearing in the flames above the meteor.

Whoosh!

The meteor rapidly descended. The moment he leaped out of the flames, he was away from the meteor's vicinity, entering a region of air with frighteningly high temperatures.

At the moment when he used his Beyonder powers to jump, Klein was immune to ordinary flames even if the temperature was rather high. However, upon exiting that state, he had to do his best to avoid the flames via Flame Controlling. Otherwise, he would suffer burn wounds and even burn to death.

In addition, the hot air wasn't within his "jump" range.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers again, causing the air at a critical point to ignite.

He phased into another flame, trying to avoid the first blast upon the meteorite's impact.

However, no matter how many times he tried and how many risks he took, he still couldn't escape the danger. There were only two choices: to jump to a point away from the forest and suffer the meteorite's resulting blast, or to jump around like an acrobatic, waiting for the mushroom cloud to swallow him up.

For a moment, Klein thought he could see himself being torn apart, scorched black with flames still burning over his body.

A thought flashed through his mind, and his vision suddenly changed as all the colors saturated. The reds became redder, the yellows become yellower, and the whites became whiter, just like a strange oil painting!

The "oil painting" seemed to be different from the real world, allowing Klein to watch as the meteorite "slowly" crashed to the ground.

That patch of the forest was instantly destroyed, and the ground clearly quaked a few times. Plumes of smoke that were mixed with flames rose up, forming a strange mushroom cloud.

Such an impact didn't affect Klein, because the blast simply didn't enter the superposed, still "oil-painting world."

Klein was stunned at first before he saw the human figure next to him.

The figure had bronze skin with a medium build. He wore a long black suit and a half top hat. He had a pair of aged brown eyes, soft facial features, and a tiny mole below his right ear.

"Mr. Azik!" Klein cried out in joy.

He finally knew what scene the revelation from the divination he made a long time ago corresponded to.

It corresponded to the present!

The sea of blood represented a perilous situation, and being pulled up by Mr. Azik meant being rescued because of him!

Just as Klein's words left his mouth, Azik waved his hand, grabbed his arm, and pushed his way through the deep layers of saturated colors!

...

The ordinary-looking quill was no longer writing on its own, and its surface had dimmed a little.

The solemn-looking middle-aged man with only one eye grabbed it and quickly wrote as if he was channeling a spirit.

"It was obvious that Azik Eggers had yet to recover all his memories and strength. While attempting to travel through the spirit world and the astral world, a latent danger appeared as a result of this problem. Hence, he and Sherlock Moriarty found themselves landing near Ince Zangwill and his friend."

Everything around him was like an illusion. The colors were saturated and superposed as they quickly receded.

As soon as Klein came to his senses, observed, and experienced this wonderful passage, he felt Mr. Azik's hand which was holding his hand tremble slightly.

Before he could even react, he felt a strong sense of weightlessness. His body couldn't help but plummet as he even began spinning.

The colors of red, yellow, white, and black around him faded rapidly, and Klein fell, hitting the solid ground hard. The impact left his head spinning and his internal organs churning.

Mixed into his vision were bits of golden stars as his vision was restored to normal. To his left was a bottomless dark valley that resembled the legendary Devil Abyss. On the right was a gray stone wall that continued to extend upwards, as if supporting the entire region.

There was no sun, no clouds, and no fog. Some light came from the luminescent moss growing in different places, and darkness and heaviness were the primary tones of this "world."

Klein pushed himself up with his left hand and nimbly jumped up. He found that the ground beneath his feet consisted of properly paved stone which could accommodate two horse carriages traveling in parallel. It was definitely not naturally formed.

One end of the road spiraled down into the dark crevices, while the other led to the top. From time to time, it was possible to see the domed hallways and halls inside the walls.

Klein raised his head, but he couldn't see the highest point. His vision was completely blocked by the gray stone wall.

Suddenly, he had an epiphany. He and Mr. Azik had "fallen" underground, into the ruins of an ancient civilization.

Is it another area, or are we still near Backlund? As soon as Klein thought about it, he heard Mr. Azik say in a low voice, “Leave here first. Head up.”

Ah? Before Klein could understand the meaning behind his words, he saw a flash of light from the side, instantly forming an illusory door that opened outwards.

The door seemed to be made of bronze. It wasn’t real enough, but it was unusually heavy. On the surface, there were countless strange patterns and indistinct symbols.

With a creak, a crack appeared in the door. Pale, bloody arms reached out from the crack, one after another. In addition, there were also greenish-black vines with baby faces and sleek tentacles with protruded eyes.

It’s very similar to the effect of Miss Sharron’s mystical item... While he was in thought, Klein noticed that the arms, vines, and tentacles were no longer as crazy as before. They had calmed down and stuck to the ground, completely unlike their former appearance of madly pulling a Sequence 6 Zombie into the door.

Immediately after, the gap between the doors widened, and a human figure emerged from it.

The figure wore a pure black clergy robe, and his facial features were clear and distinct like an ancient, classical sculpture.

His hair was dark gold in color, his eyes were dark blue, and he had a high nose bridge. He wore a bonnet which was popular with the elderly, and his sideburns were somewhat gray in contrast to his middle-aged appearance.

Looking at the figure’s completely lifeless eye, Klein suddenly recalled the name of the person who had just arrived.

Ince Zangwill!

The former archbishop who had directed the Tingen incident and dealt heavy damage to the Nighthawks team, as well as being the owner of Sealed Artifact 0-08!

Almost at the same time, Klein turned around and, following Mr. Azik's instructions, fled towards the top of the road.

He knew full well that being a Sequence 6, he would only serve to be a burden and distraction in a clash between demigods.

In this race for time, false modesty and pretentious words were unnecessary. They would harm both him and his companion!

Tap. Tap. Tap. As there was nothing he could ignite underground, all Klein could do was grit his teeth and run as fast as he could.

While running, he heard Azik's calm, gentle voice.

"Run all the way out of here.

"Don't worry about me. I've recalled a lot of things, and I know that I once remained in a particular Sequence for a very long period of time. That Sequence's name is Undying."

Tap. Tap. Tap. Klein circled around the cliff and entered a dark domed corridor. The walls on both sides were engraved with mottled murals.

At that moment, he heard a dignified and hoarse voice reverberate from where he previously was.

"Teleportation is prohibited here!"

A figure had arrived beside Ince Zangwill without anyone noticing. He was floating in midair in defiance with the laws of physics. He wore a gorgeous gold mask.

And Ince Zangwill didn't attack immediately. Instead, he glanced at the bend where Klein's figure had disappeared.

Sequence 4 Nightwatcher of the Church of Evernight's pathway could grant a certain amount of bad luck to others, but Ince Zangwill, who had just silently "blessed" Klein, realized that things like Klein slipping and falling into the ravine didn't happen.

Not only that, Ince Zangwill seemed to be hallucinating as well, as he saw a thin, grayish-white fog.

Without having the luxury of time to think, he withdrew his gaze and cast it back to Azik Eggers.

Tap. Tap. Tap... Running at full speed, Klein suddenly stopped in his tracks. His spiritual intuition told him that there were people ahead of him—Beyonders! They were most likely the guards here!

After contemplating for a bit, he reached out with his left hand and wiped his face. At the same time, crisp sounds emitted from his body as his body grew seven to eight centimeters taller.

By the time his left palm left his face, he had turned into a single-eyed middle-aged man with dark golden hair and a high nose—Ince Zangwill!

Recalling the other party's demeanor, Klein used an illusion to change his clothes before quickly walking around the corner and entering a large hall.

There were four guards in dark black armor, their gazes keen.

Klein's face was calm as he walked over. He deliberately spoke in a hoarse voice and sternly said, "Someone has sneaked in here. I'm looking for him.

"Did you discover any clues?"

The leader of the guards first examined him before lowering his head and saying, "Mr. Zangwill, nothing happened here."

"Okay." Klein nodded slightly, walked past them, and left the hall.

During this entire process, although he remained highly nervous with his back drenched in sweat, he appeared to be calm and reserved. He looked no different from Ince Zangwill, be it his appearance or his aura.

Relying on his Faceless powers and his running speed, he quickly passed through three checkpoints and arrived at the end of the building.

There was an illusionary door formed by pure ghostly-blue light. Apart from that, it was completely sealed shut.

Although he was worried about the demigod battle between Mr. Azik and Ince Zangwill, Klein remained hidden in the shadows outside the room. He patiently spied for a while and found that someone had

passed through the ghostly-blue light while another person had used it to leave.

He noticed that those who left had to show something that looked like a badge before they could get permission from the four guards to enter the door of light.

I don't have time to wait for the next person with a badge. I can only take the risk... The battle over there could end at any moment... Even if doesn't, the search order will be sent over here quickly... Klein quickly made his decision, once again walking into the room with the likeness of Ince Zangwill.

"Something has happened outside." He had no confidence in mimicking the former archbishop's voice, so he could only express himself with deliberate hoarseness as an indication that he had experienced an intense battle.

The guards who were left confused by the news didn't react until Klein approached them. They reached out their hands to stop him.

"Mr. Zangwill, where is your pass?"

"Don't waste any more time!" As he spoke, Klein pulled a badge from his pocket and thrust it into the man's hand.

This calm performance made the rest of the guards relax.

The moment the guard who had received the "pass" looked down, Klein suddenly lunged forward!

Just as he landed on the ground, he quickly did another roll and went straight through the ghostly-blue door!

Only then did the guard realize that the badge in his palm had rapidly faded, turning into a piece of paper.

On the top left of the piece of paper, there was a rather commonly seen blessing recently: "Happy New Year!"

...

The abyss-like crevice was filled with an illusory, pitch-black liquid. Moreover, the surface of the water was still bubbling without stopping, and many pale-skinned arms were wildly extending outwards.

Ince Zangwill had a general idea of Azik's standards, and he was neither surprised nor afraid, for he had a demigod to help him at the moment.

What worried him the most was another problem. 0-08, which was forcefully developing the story, could backfire on him at any moment.

At that moment, he swept his gaze past the corner of his eye and was shocked to find that the quill, 0-08, had left his pocket without him realizing it. It was floating in front of the gray rock wall, fervently writing lines of words.

"...In a fierce battle, there would always be a variety of accidents, such as Ince Zangwill's belt snapping and having his pants drop."

...

The ghostly-blue light filled Klein's eyes, constructing a passageway that overlapped with layers of light between the deep darkness and the roaming invisible creatures.

Klein didn't bother to observe his surroundings as he scrambled to the end of the passage.

He stood up, straightened his clothes, restored Ince Zangwill's stern expression, and stepped into the rippling screen of light.

After a moment of being mentally adrift, he found himself in another room, which was also occupied by quite a few guards.

"Something went wrong underground, keep an eye out. Do not allow anyone entry," Klein calmly instructed, walking towards the door at an unhurried pace.

"Yes, Mr. Zangwill!" the guards replied respectfully.

At this moment, the guard from before passed through the ghostly-blue light and shouted loudly, "There's a problem with that Zangwill from before!"

Everyone turned to look at the door, but Klein was nowhere to be seen.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The guards immediately split up into several groups to search in every direction for their target and notify their companions. The scene momentarily turned rather chaotic.

One of them had just rounded the corner when he saw Ince Zangwill's back.

Subconsciously, he pulled out his sword that coruscated with lightning and performed a forward cleave.

Oof!

The figure floated away weightlessly and became a splintered paper figurine.

At the same time, two loud bangs could be heard. Pale golden bullets passed through the visor that wasn't pulled down and accurately hit the guard's head.

Before he could even cry out, the guard collapsed to the ground with a thud, convulsing.

Klein stepped out of the shadows in the corner and expressionlessly slipped the revolver back into his underarm holster.

After burning the paper figurine, he quickly dragged the guard to an empty room and changed into black armor, switching his appearance to the fallen guard.

Then, he picked up the lightning sword and left the room, closing the wooden door behind him and running forward in a "panic."

He was going to notify every guard along the way that there was a problem with Ince Zangwill!

Chapter 474: Edessak's Story

Inside the solarium of Red Rose Manor.

Edessak Augustus stood by the full-length window, looking at the indifferent Trissy with a gloomy face, and he said in a voice that was like a volcano about to erupt, "Why did you run away again?"

Trissy looked past him and beyond the window, chuckled, and answered with a question, "Did you see the meteor shower? Did you feel the trembling of the earth?"

Behind her, porcelain and other items in the cabinet had fallen onto the thick, soft carpet. The old butler, Funkel, was standing beside her.

"It's not too rare for that to happen," Edessak replied in a low voice.

Trissy raised her eyebrows slightly.

"You are very dull.

"Then let me be frank with you. I am a Demoness!"

Prince Edessak's expression didn't change at all. He turned to the old butler and said, "Guard the door and prevent anyone from entering."

"Yes, Your Highness." Funkel gave Trissy a cold look and walked out of the solarium.

When he heard the door close, Edessak exhaled slowly.

"Trissy Cheek, heh, you prefer to be called Trissy.

"I know you're a Demoness. The person who helped you purchase the Beyonder ingredients failed. What you received was provided by me!

"I don't mind that my princess consort is a Witch or a Demoness. I've even seen your wanted poster!"

Trissy was surprised at first, but she then revealed a mocking smile.

"You sure know a lot...

"Did you know that I was once a man, and that my real name is Tris?"

"...What?" Edessak's eyes widened, and he tilted his head a little, as though he couldn't believe what he had heard.

Upon seeing this, Trissy couldn't help but laugh. She laughed so hard that she frantically bent back and forth like a lunatic.

"Haha, you didn't make a mistake. I was once a man! I used to be like you, and the thing down there was longer and thicker than yours! However, the Witch potion had forcefully changed my gender!

"Are you disgusted? Does it give you goosebumps?"

She vented the words she had been repressing all this time before taking two steps forward.

Edessak instinctively retreated, his Adam's apple moving involuntarily.

"No, it's not like that... You're a real woman. There's no problem. I can definitely confirm that!" He mumbled to himself, then he raised his voice and said, "From the moment I met you, you were a real woman. I don't want to know what you were like in the past! I can pretend that nothing like this happened! What I like, what I love is the present you!"

Stunned, Trissy raised her hand to wipe away her tears of laughter.

"You're a really pathetic man.

"Do you still not understand? Our meeting wasn't a coincidence. Even your interest..."

She paused in disgust and continued, "Even your interest in me was a result of someone else's arrangement. Don't you think that everything happened too quickly? I believe in love at first sight, but I don't believe that it possesses such powerful bewitchment properties. You act like the main character in a third-rate romance novel, becoming obsessed with love from just one meeting. You fell in love with a stranger, forgetting the type of person you once liked. That's crazy!"

Prince Edessak's eyes went blank as his mouth turned agape, but he didn't speak.

His body suddenly swayed, as if he had finally awoken from a long dream.

"Y-you are indeed my type... But my reaction, it's r-really too exaggerated..."

The corners of Trissy's mouth curled up, and she turned her head to the side to let out a sneer.

"What a pathetic man, to have what you like being arranged by someone else. It's like you're a puppet on strings.

"Don't you understand? You're a person that can be sacrificed, and I, as well as being a hostage for the cooperation between the royal family and the Demoness Sect, am also a necessary disguise for this deception.

"I possess an important item of the Demoness Sect, and under your strict supervision, I can be destroyed at any time and result in the loss of the treasure. This is the sincerity of our cooperation, and once the matter is exposed to the other three Churches or the military, the development of this matter will be very simple. Prince Edessak secretly kept a Demoness due to his lust. After knowing of his heinous sins, he shoots himself in the mouth. Then, all the problems would be covered up." "No!" Edessak blurted out.

Then, with a twisted expression, he asked, "Why are they cooperating with the Demoness Sect?"

"How could a hostage who might be abandoned at any moment know?" Trissy gave a self-deprecating laugh. "That's the whole reason behind why I want to flee."

She lowered her head and chuckled in a low voice. Her body trembled slightly from the laughter.

After a few seconds, she raised her head once again, curled the corners of her mouth, and said, "What do you want to do with me? Strip me down and throw me onto the bed? No, you've probably formed a psychological resistance. Actually, I don't mind giving you some warmth right now. It's not a shameful thing for two poor people to comfort each other."

Prince Edessak darkened his rotund face and looked at Trissy silently for nearly a minute.

Suddenly, he closed his eyes, pointed to another side and said, "You can leave.

“Leave through that door.”

Trissy raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

“You’re letting me go?”

“Yes.” Edessak turned to look out the window and slowly replied, “I’ll stop Funkel. As for whether or not you can escape from the other pursuers, that will depend on your own strength and luck.”

A dazed look flashed in Trissy’s eyes a few seconds before she quickly ran towards the hidden door.

Before leaving, she couldn’t help but look back.

“What about you?”

Edessak didn’t turn his head, but he continued to stare out of the full-length windows as if searching for the shadows of his past.

He smiled and said, “Me? Let me live in this beautiful story and welcome its final end—good or bad.”

Trissy took a breath and, without further ado, went through the secret door.

...

In a quiet room inside Saint Samuel Cathedral.

One of the thirteen archbishops of the Church of Evernight, the person in charge of the Backlund diocese, Saint Anthony Stevenson had received an urgent telegram from Earl Hall’s residence.

This bearded old man with deeply recessed eyes had an extremely clean appearance. Even though he wore a black and red archbishop’s robe, he didn’t give off a gloomy feeling.

However, anyone who faced him would shudder from the bottom of their hearts. It was as if their spirituality was dominated by fear, or as if they were facing an unknown existence lurking deep in the darkness which stared back at them.

Trissy Cheek... Primordial Demoness... Saint Anthony lightly patted the paper and immediately stood up.

The light around him suddenly vanished, as if swallowed up by the gloom of the room.

All the worshippers in the cathedral instantly felt the coming of night.

Everything quickly returned to normal as Saint Anthony appeared in front of the Chanis Gate beneath the cathedral.

Today, the one leading the team was the Spirit Guide, Daly Simone.

Without waiting for her to ask, Archbishop Saint Anthony instructed in a deep voice, “Make preparations. The process shall begin. I’m awakening a Sealed Artifact.” He wanted to use 0-17.

He wanted to use that terrifying Sealed Artifact to confirm and deal with the Trissy matter.

And this was the only Grade 0 Sealed Artifact stored outside the Holy Cathedral. Only two of the Church’s upper echelons knew that it was in the Backlund diocese.

“Yes, Your Grace.” Daly was startled for a second, then she immediately responded.

While waiting, Saint Anthony closed his eyes as a portion of 0-17’s information surfaced in his mind.

“Number: 17.

“Name: XXXXXX

“Danger Grade: 0. Extremely Dangerous. It’s of the highest importance and of the highest confidentiality. It is not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied.

“Security Clearance: Pope, Team A researchers, and Archbishop of the Backlund diocese (Note: When the archbishop is transferred out of the Backlund diocese, the corresponding memories have to be wiped out using Sealed Artifact 1-29).

“Sealed Method: The seal is completed through the combination of 1-29 and 1-80.

“Description: This isn’t an item.

“This is a living angel.

“‘Her’ appearance is beautiful with black hair and eyes. Looks like a young woman, but ‘Her’ actual age cannot be estimated.

“...’She’ doesn’t have the wings recorded in canon. Just from ‘Her’ appearance, ‘She’ is no different from an ordinary person.

“...She does not have the ability to think and has lost all sentience.

“...Anyone and everything that comes close to ‘Her’ will completely disappear... Through divination and other methods, it can be confirmed that they’re still alive but are impossible to locate. Currently, 1825 methods have been attempted, with every one of them failing.

“...0-17’s range of influence will expand and contract without any pattern. Currently, it has caused more than 70 researchers to vanish.”

...

“Warning: ‘She’ cannot be used!”

“Appendix 1: This Sealed Artifact first appeared in the Pale Era of the Fourth Epoch.

Exact year: Missing.

Exact date: Missing.

Exaction location: Missing”

“Appendix 2: Based on the information, ‘She’ has been awakened five times.”

...

By passing on the message to search for the Ince Zangwill imposter, Klein, with the help of divination, overcame the interference of the Master Key and ran all the way to the exit given to him from the revelation.

He knew very well that with a carpet-style search, the corpse in the empty room would soon be discovered, so he had to race against time to get to the exit.

A Faceless's powers should be matched with a mystical item that can destroy corpses and clean up my tracks... Having gained true knowledge from practice, it didn't take Klein long to cross the checkpoints and patrolling teams before he arrived at the exit where the divination pointed him to.

However, what made him even more surprised was that there were no guards here, only a heavy stone door standing there by itself.

What's going on? Why is there no one guarding the exit? Was my divination misguided, or are the guards outside? As his thoughts raced, Klein found a corner and took off his armor, restoring his lightweight and agility.

Then, he came to the stone door that opened outwards and groped his way to the corner of the left wall.

After carefully checking with a gold coin, Klein took out the ancient bronze key. He leaned it against the wall and gently twisted it.

Water ripples appeared as they spread out slightly. Klein silently passed through the wall, without taking the door!

The first thing he saw was the natural light that fell from the dome, which meant that this place was really an exit.

Klein carefully stood motionless as he quickly adapted to the light. He saw neat but mottled gray stones under his feet and thick pillars in front of him.

In the middle of the hall, four hooded figures knelt around what appeared to be an altar.

Soon after, Klein heard a soft but gentle female voice.

"Mr. A, are you ready?"

Mr. A? Mr. A of the Aurora Order? Klein, who had intended to cling towards the walls and shadows and proceed towards the door, shrank back silently.

Ince Zangwill should be working with some faction of the royal family... Those who are able to excavate and hide such a large underground ruin near Backlund must be one of the main powers in the Loen Kingdom...

With Ince Zangwill and 0-08 participating in this matter, the Church of the Goddess can be ruled out. Although the people of the Lord of Storms are a bit reckless and male chauvinists, it's unlikely that they will work with the Demoness Sect. At least until now, there have been no Beyonders who appear to be of the Sailor pathway... In the same way, the Church of Steam and Machinery aren't likely suspects...

Even the Aurora Order is involved? What are they trying to do?

Klein leaned his back against the wall and slowed his breathing, thinking and listening to the conversation in the middle of the hall.

After a short period of silence, a hoarse voice sounded, "It's done."

The answer was so concise that Klein couldn't make out what they were planning.

The melodious and pleasant voice from before laughed in a low voice, "You don't seem to trust us very much?" "That's right," Mr. A answered bluntly.

"Heh heh, then I'll be frank and describe our goal and why I'm seeking your cooperation." The gentle female voice didn't sound angry at all. "We've done certain things and left behind clear traces. Before we're discovered by the Churches of Evernight, Storm, and Steam, as well as the military, we must do the corresponding cleanup, and this requires your help. Yes, it seems like you don't really understand what I mean, so let me give you an example. Imagine—Imagine you performed a heinous crime like murder in a house, so what's the best way of eliminating any evidence and clues?"

“There’s no need for that. It’s our goal to have others witness such an act,” Mr. A said indifferently.

...As expected of a member of the Aurora Order... They’re all a bunch of lunatics... Klein made a preliminary identification of the speaking man to be “Mr. A” who had killed the Intis Ambassador.

“...Suppose it were me, not you.” The clear, soft female voice had a faint wheezing sound.

After a second, Mr. A. replied, “Burn that house and bury all the clues there.”

The clear and gentle female voice had a smiling tone.

“That’s exactly what we planned. I’m in charge of ‘committing arson,’ while you can use this opportunity to go with this development to create a passageway or vessel, so as to allow your Lord to descend upon this world.

“And the only price you guys have to pay is to bear all the infamy and gain the most enmity from the military and the three Churches. But I don’t think you would mind that.”

“As long as we can welcome the return of the Lord, even if we’re abhorred by every single force, we won’t show any sign of cowardice.” Mr. A’s tone no longer appeared indifferent and distant.

*Arson? The Aurora Order will take this opportunity to complete the ritual for the arrival of the True Creator? This is probably the third time... Why did I bump into this again... What a f*cking bad twist of fate...* Klein couldn’t help but curse inwardly in Chinese.

At this very moment, he was extremely curious and wary against the things that were plotted by this particular royal family faction, Ince Zangwill, and the Demoness Sect. It was terrifying enough to even use the descent of the True Creator as a scapegoat!

Perhaps they’ve kept some cards up their sleeves and will eventually destroy the Aurora Order’s ritual in the end and destroy all the other factions except themselves... Klein calmly thought while feeling tense.

“It appears like you have no other questions,” said the gentle female voice. “This place is sufficiently well-hidden and can be used for the required set-up. You can do your ritual here at ease and won’t need to worry that it’ll be interrupted before you succeed. As for the things outside, we’ve already finished our preparations a long time ago. It’s just waiting for the ignition of a ‘spark.’ If you still have doubts, then you can make another round of checks.”

Just as Mr. A was about to speak, Klein heard a dull thud. It was the sound of the door opening.

“Who permitted you to enter? Didn’t I declare that no one is to approach this area?” The gentle female voice suppressed her rage.

“Lady Despair, there’s an emergency! Someone has infiltrated the basement! The higher-ups sent me to arrange for a follow-up and close the corresponding passages,” a male voice with a distinct Backlund accent responded very quickly.

The so-called “Lady Despair” maintained her silence for a few seconds, as though she was communicating with an unknown existence to confirm the situation.

Finally, she said without changing her tone, “Go back inside. Don’t come out again, nor allow anyone out. Wait until further notice.”

“Yes, Lady Despair!” The man ran towards the stone door, with a heavy thud sounding in the background.

From the place where Klein was hiding, he could clearly see the stone door leading to the back area. He waited for seven or eight seconds before a figure of normal height and build appeared.

Phew... The man took a deep breath, stretched out his hands, and bared his teeth as he pushed open the heavy stone door with a ferocious expression.

In that instant, Klein had completely taken in the man’s appearance and characteristics without missing a single detail.

This was the Beyonder power of a Faceless!

That man's skin was reddish-brown, and he was clearly of Southern Continent descent. His facial features had no special characteristics, making it difficult to remember him.

Due to him gritting and baring his teeth, he revealed a portion of his teeth. The third tooth on the upper left of his mouth flickered with a golden light. It was a fake tooth.

This... Klein, with the spiritual intuition of a Seer, frowned as he felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity.

Very quickly, he used his skills to recall the source of his familiarity.

The Hanged Man had once requested the Tarot Club members to find a man with reddish-brown skin and a thick Backlund accent who had the third tooth on his left missing.

The man's name was Baelen, and he was involved in the escape and disappearance of many colonial island slaves!

And at this moment, the man in front of Klein was almost identical to the Baelen that was described by The Hanged Man!

The disappearance of the colonial island slaves...

The many tribes of the Southern Continent vanishing into thin air...

Baelen's appearance here...

Capim, who took a large share of the underground slave trade, was protected by four Beyonders suspected to be of the Arbiter pathway. Among them, the strongest was a Sequence 6, and even a Sequence 5...

Capim constantly targeted relatively innocent girls in his abductions...

The passing of the Grain Act, the improvement of the textile machines all resulted in a large number of people losing their jobs...

Many female textile workers silently left East Borough after receiving new jobs, not leaving any clues...

The scattered dots instantly formed a line in Klein's mind, pointing directly into the depths of the earth!

What are they up to, that they need such a large number of people, as well as so many pure and innocent girls? A ritual? An extremely terrifying ritual that takes a very long period of time while being held in secret? Klein's pupils suddenly contracted.

Creak... Bang! The stone door closed and Baelen disappeared from his sight.

The hall was silent for a few seconds before Mr. A's deep and hoarse voice rang out again.

"I smell an accident. Let's begin. We need to hurry before it arrives."

Lady Despair responded slowly, "That's exactly what I was thinking.

"But I need you to send me to East Borough."

East Borough? Klein had a bad premonition.

"No problem," Mr. A answered with a lack of emotion.

Under the hood, a transparent and blurry book appeared in front of him. Accompanied by a distant and indistinct chant, he said, "I came, I saw, I record."

The book quickly flipped open and stopped at one of the pages. Soon after, it began to emit a light blue and illusory light.

The light enveloped the white-robed Lady Despair, causing her figure to blur at first, then becoming indistinct.

In an instant, Lady Despair saw countless indescribable silhouettes. She discovered lustrous brilliances which contained the bright and pure splendor of endless knowledge at the highest point.

Her body was being dragged forward by a strange force as she rapidly tore through space. Not long after, she left her original spot and arrived at a secluded, uninhabited, and filthy corner of an alley.

She pulled down her veil to cover her face and looked up into the sky. The afternoon sun had once again been obscured by clouds and fog, turning pale and dark.

The light yellow fog wasn't particularly thick, and it sank down to every corner of Backlund, giving off a slight choking sensation amidst its coldness and moisture.

It's a pity that the smog didn't reach the point when it's in its worst and calmest state... The accident that happened to Trissy, the sudden and temporary loss of control over 0-08, the appearance of Azik, the destruction previously caused by Black Emperor, these had complicated matters, garnering the attention of others. It forced the operation to be brought forward to today... Lady Despair surveyed the area, walked out of the alley, and into the streets.

Her steps were slow, as though she were wandering in a sea of fog.

Wherever she passed, the fog would unnoticeably thicken. Tinged with an iron-black color, it silently lowered the range of one's visibility.

As she left the street, a sallow-faced tramp in an old jacket suddenly coughed violently and fell to the ground.

The two poor people close to the tramp retreated in horror, and then they covered their throats with their hands as they gasped for air. It was as if they were suffering from severe lung disease or bronchitis and could no longer breathe.

A smog which was a mixture of iron-black and pale yellow colors descended upon East Borough, the dock area, and the smokespewing factory district as it continued to spread throughout Backlund.

Various scenes in the distance were "drowned," and even the towering clock tower was only a pale shadow. One by one, workers and poor people felt the discomfort as they fought against the cold, and the disorderly tramps fell one after another in the woman's wake, their lives as fragile as the bubbles formed during laundry.

Lady Despair's expression was calm and gentle, as though she were finishing a work of art.

Like an ordinary person, she walked among the pedestrians as she chuckled and said in a low voice, "The Loen Kingdom's history will remember this day.

"The Great Smog of Backlund."

...

The dark valley had been completely covered by the black, incorporeal water, but 0-08 didn't stop writing.

It fabricated ridiculous and terrifying stories wherever it could land its tip on.

"...The dropping of pants didn't affect Ince Zangwill's performance, because he was wearing a long robe, perhaps having anticipated a similar accident...

"The Imperative Mage stunned Azik Eggers in the spot, robbing him of his two most powerful Beyonder powers at the last moment —truly a great assistant in every meaning of the word. However, the stacked door of the spirit world and the Underworld were attracted by Azik's characteristic. It began being stirred by the powers of their battle, causing unpredictable changes.

"At that moment, an unknown existence was attracted, resulting in 'Him' passing by. 'He' took this opportunity to extend his hands into the real world. Oh no! 'He' caught Ince Zangwill!"

In midair, two bloody arms which were covered in squirming flesh suddenly appeared behind the clergyman-robed Ince Zangwill!

They caught Ince Zangwill's shoulders, dragging him into the void and into the spirit world.

Chapter 476: The Straw Men

Light suddenly faded from where Ince Zangwill disappeared, staining the area with the richest and deepest darkness.

In the darkness, the sounds of melodic chanting could be heard. It was quiet and tranquil, hypnotic even. Even the countless pale arms flailing upwards underneath the pitch-black water seemed to slow down, no longer as frenzied as before, as if they had won redemption for their souls.

In such a "dark night," a figure walked out. It was none other than Ince Zangwill who had just been dragged into the spirit world.

Compared to before, he had lost the bonnet on his head. The clothes on his left shoulder were tattered, and a piece of flesh had been torn off. Faint yellow pus bubbled out one after another.

His eyes were no longer indifferent, but filled with pain, as if he was suffering some unimaginable torment.

The 0-08 quill continued writing.

"Some might feel regret, while others might rejoice. Ince Zangwill had the umbilical cord of the evil god which came from the baby in Megose's womb. It was from the True Creator, and through the umbilical cord, he successfully escaped from the restraints of the unknown existence and forcefully returned to the real world, but as a result, he had lost that mystical item. In addition, he would suffer the ire of the evil god's spawn from having failed to descend for a short period of time.

"This made his strength appear like some kind of commodity in a department store during a change of seasons, with only 55% left. Yes, this number is extremely accurate."

...

In a street in the depths of East Borough.

Old Kohler hurried back to his rented apartment, carrying some ham in a paper bag.

He looked around warily, afraid that those ravenous wolves around him would pounce on him and steal his New Year's gift.

He had seen wolves back when he was still in the countryside, but to his surprise, he was able to experience that familiar feeling in Backlund.

It's still too expensive. I can only split the cost with someone else and cut it into pieces... This is enough for the new year holiday. I can eat two slices of ham for every meal. Three slices, no—at least five slices of ham. I can cut some of them off and stew them together with the potatoes. I don't even need to add salt... With this in mind, Old Kohler looked at the ham in his arms, seeing the white spots mixed in with the red meat, his throat couldn't help but twitch and he swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

As he walked, he felt the fog around him grow thicker. The cathedral's clock tower that was still relatively clear in the distance was gradually swallowed by a mixture of iron-black and pale yellow colors. Even the pedestrians around him were reduced to blurry shadows once they were ten steps away.

Old Kohler suddenly felt like he has been forgotten by the world as he raised his palm to cover his nose.

"Why does the fog smell so bad today?" he muttered, and he quickened his pace.

One step, two steps, three steps. Old Kohler felt his face heat up and his forehead start to burn.

His chest tightened, his throat felt uncomfortable, and soon he was experiencing difficulty breathing.

Have I fallen ill? Damn it, I still want to have a good new year's, and now I can only send my savings to the clinic or hospital... No, perhaps I'll be fine with some sleep. I'll be fine sleeping with a blanket over me! Old Kohler silently muttered to himself as his head grew hotter and hotter and his senses became more and more muddled.

Gasp. Gasp. Gasp. He heard his own labored breathing, and his hands went limp as the bag of ham fell heavily to the ground.

Old Kohler instinctively bent down to pick it up, but he ended up falling to the ground.

He held the bag of ham and tried to keep it in his arms.

At this moment, he thought there was thick phlegm rushing up his throat, blocking it, so he fought back, making panting sounds.

Thud! Old Kohler began to see, through his blurry vision, that a few steps away, someone else had also fallen and was gasping for breath. He was about the same age as him, in his fifties, with white sideburns.

Suddenly, he understood that he was about to die.

It reminded him of his own wife and children, who, like him, suddenly got infected with the plague and died shortly after.

It reminded him of the time when he had been hospitalized. The patients in the same room were still chatting and laughing that night, but they would be sent to the morgue early the next morning.

It reminded him of the friends he had known as a tramp, many of which had disappeared over the course of the winter until they were found stiff under a bridge or some spot which was sheltered from the wind. A small number died from suddenly having food.

This reminded him of the days when he was still a decent worker, when the neighbors in the neighborhood would suddenly die like this. Some of them died from headaches, some of them died from accidentally falling into molten steel, some of them died from all sorts of painful, bloating ailments. Some of them even collapsed silently in the factories, one batch after another.

This reminded him of what he had heard from a drunk in the bar when he was scrounging for information.

“People like us are like straw on the ground, falling when the wind blows. It’s even possible to fall on our own even without the wind.”

The wind is coming... Old Kohler suddenly had such a thought.

He clutched the bag of ham tightly as he groped the pocket of his old jacket for the crumpled cigarette he had always been unwilling to smoke.

What he couldn't understand was why his healthy body would suddenly become ill. It wasn't like he had never experienced such a dense fog before.

What he couldn't understand was the reason for him suddenly collapsing just as his life was back on track, moving in a direction that was sufficiently nice for him. Furthermore, he had been paid in advance by Detective Moriarty to buy his longawaited ham for the new year, and he was looking forward to tasting it.

Old Kohler fished out that crumpled cigarette, but he no longer had the strength to lift his arms again as they slammed heavily to the ground.

He used the last of his strength to shout out the words that had been building up inside of him, but he could only let the frail words linger at his mouth without producing them.

He heard his last words. He heard himself ask, "Why?"

...

In an apartment at the edge of East Borough.

Liv hung up the last piece of clothing she had washed and waited for it to dry.

She looked at the sky outside, somewhat unsure of the time due to the thick fog which had appeared without her realizing it.

"Anyway, it's still early, and we've already done the laundry..." Liv's expression grew heavy.

It wasn't a good thing to finish work too early. It didn't mean that they could rest for it meant not having enough work and inadequate income.

Liv took a deep breath, turned around, and looked at her eldest daughter, Freja, who was wiping her hands and casting her gaze towards the vocabulary notebook in the opposite room.

"It's almost New Year's. Most of our clients have left Backlund and have gone on vacation elsewhere. We can't go on like this. We have to find new work."

As she spoke, she walked towards the door.

“During this period, the rich will host banquets one after another. They definitely won’t have enough servants and might hire temporary kitchen cleaners. I plan on inquiring. Freja, you stay at home and pick up Daisy when the time comes. We need income, but so do the thieves, bandits, and human traffickers of those prostitutes to welcome the new year.”

In the East Borough, every woman, who didn’t work in the factories, had to be skilled or aggressive enough in order to survive.

Freja answered briskly, “Alright.”

Her mind was already on the desk and vocabulary notebook next door.

Liv had just opened the door when she stumbled and fell to the floor.

Cough! Cough! Cough! She broke into a violent coughing fit as her face flushed red, with every joint in her body experiencing an unbearable ache.

Freja ran over in panic and squatted beside her.

“Mother, what’s wrong with you? Mother, what’s wrong with you?”

“It’s nothing. Cough, I’m fine.” Liv began to find it harder to breathe.

“No, you’re sick—sick! I’ll take you to the hospital immediately!” Freja tried to help her mother up.

“It’s too expensive, too... expensive. Cough—Let’s go to a charity hospital. A charity hospital, I can wait. It’s n-not a big problem.” Liv gasped a response.

Freja burst into tears and her vision blurred rapidly.

But at that moment, she felt her lungs burn, and her body went limp as she fell to the ground with Liv.

“What’s the matter with you, Freja? Cough! You’re sick too?” Liv shouted anxiously. “There’s money, cough—in the closet, cough —in the hole in the wall. You have to be quick. Go to the hospital! Get a good—a good doctor!”

Freja tried to say something, but not a sound came out from her mouth. Her eyes slanted up to the door beside her.

It was their bedroom, their bunk beds. On top of it was her favorite table and her vocabulary notebook.

Her body suddenly began to twitch.

Liv's coughing stopped.

Within the public elementary school at the edge of East Borough, the fog still wasn't thick yet, but many students had already started to cough.

The experienced teacher on duty immediately ordered, "Quick, to the cathedral. We need to head for the cathedral next door!"

Daisy stood up in a panic and ran with the crowd to the cathedral next to the school.

Suddenly, her heart palpitated as she felt the horror of losing something important.

...Mother... Freja. Daisy turned her head sharply, wanting to rush home against the crowd.

However, she was stopped. She was caught by her teachers and forcibly dragged towards the cathedral.

Daisy struggled and screamed at the top of her lungs, "Mother! Freja!

"Mother! Freja!"

...

In East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, the old or those with latent ailments collapsed in the fog in succession like felled trees, while those who came into contact with them felt as if they had been infected by the plague. They died quickly, and even the able-bodied adults and children also felt slightly unwell.

In their eyes, the light yellow and iron-black fog was like the descent of Death.

On the Tuesday of the last week in 1349, Backlund was shrouded in smog.

...

In the corner of the hall, Klein pressed himself against the stone wall so that he wouldn't be discovered by Mr. A.

Soon, he heard muffled groans and could smell the scent of flesh and blood.

"Give up your lives for the Lord," Mr. A's voice suddenly sounded.

Thud. Thud. The sound of figures collapsing entered Klein's ears, and a strong spirituality fluctuation appeared and constantly reverberated.

Mr. A sacrificed his four attendants? Just as this thought appeared in Klein's mind, illusory layers of weeping sounds could be heard. Some of them were calling out for their mothers, others coughing violently, and some moaning in pain.

As half of an expert at mysticism, Klein seemed to see a series of disgruntled and transparent figures entering the ritual one after another, followed by the years of numbness, despair, pain, and resentment from the dock area, factory district, and East Borough.

Has it officially begun? Klein closed his eyes and leaned his back against the wall, his right hand clenching and relaxing.

For him, the best thing to do at this moment was to slip out of the hall and flee into the distance while Mr. A was concentrating on the ritual.

His right hand loosened and tightened before relaxing many times in a row.

Seven or eight seconds later, Klein opened his eyes, the corners of his mouth curling upwards in an exaggerated manner.

He reached out his hand to grab the revolver, turned around abruptly, and dashed out.

Dressed in his black double-breasted frock coat, he raised his right hand and aimed at the altar.

The first thing Klein saw was the altar, which was surrounded by layers of light, and the tall, thin figure standing in it.

The figure took off its hood, revealing a beautiful, devilishly feminine face, with a left chest, shoulders, abdomen, and thighs all covered in squirming, sticky, disgusting flesh and blood.

His surroundings were filled with illusory, transparent shadows that brimmed with feelings such as numbness, despair, pain, and depression.

Beyond the altar, the four figures which were praying had fallen. Their skin was shriveled, and their bones were tightly wrapped, like corpses that had been eroded for many years.

At the top of the hall, rays of light pierced through the air, quickly entering the altar through the stone pillars, floor, and air that were filled with symbols and magic labels.

As soon as Klein emerged from his hiding place, Mr. A opened his eyes and looked in his direction.

His pupils were dyed with blood, and an extreme madness was contained within his cold eyes.

If it were any other Beyonder, they would've subconsciously looked away, not daring to look him in the eye. But Klein, who had faced the Eternal Blazing Sun and met Blasphemer Amon, wasn't afraid of this. Calmly pulling the trigger, he sent a silver demon-hunting bullet engraved with many patterns flying towards the altar.

Witnessing this scene, Mr. A subconsciously wanted to raise his hand, but he stopped in the end. He watched indifferently as the silver bullet drilled into the layer of light surrounding the altar.

Silently, the patterned demon-hunting bullet melted and disappeared under the layers of radiance, engulfed in untold resentment and negative emotions.

In the end, it completely disintegrated, leaving not a single trace of it behind.

Klein's pupils shrank as he shot the rest of the revolver's bullets. The pale golden purifying bullets and the bronze exorcism bullets shot out, piercing through the radiant barrier one after another.

However, they disintegrated in the same way and disappeared without creating the slightest ripple.

Mr. A laughed hoarsely.

"It's no use, puny worm. The ritual has already officially begun, and with your strength, it cannot be broken or interrupted. Even if you're a Sequence 5 Beyonder!

"But you're also fortunate. You will live to witness the coming of our Lord, and be integrated into his body."

With that, Mr. A. ignored Klein and closed his eyes again, as if he was indeed nothing but a puny worm.

The Shepherd raised his hands in a gesture of open arms and shouted out in ancient Hermes, "The Lord that created everything;

"The Lord who reigns behind the curtain of shadows; "The degenerate nature of all living things.

"Your devout believers pray for your coming;

"I am willing to offer my body as a vessel to bear the burden of your great will!"

Amidst the prayers, a light from an unknown source appeared above Mr. A's head, completely enveloping him.

The grievances and negative emotions that were gathered around Mr. A surged into his body like a tidal wave.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein snapped his fingers repeatedly and used Flame Controlling, trying his best to attack the altar, but they still couldn't resist being disintegrated against the barrier of light.

What can I do? All my other mystical items are above the gray fog. To take them out, I need to hold a ritual, which would waste at least a minute or two, and a body without protection would be very

dangerous... What should I do? Klein rationally stopped his attempts and stood there, his mind racing.

Furthermore, whether it was the Sun Brooch, the Biological Poison Bottle, the All-Black Eye, or the Black Emperor card that raised his level, none of them seemed capable of breaking through the altar's barrier!

Is waiting for Miss Justice's call for reinforcements the only thing I can do? Or do I just watch helplessly as the True Creator descends? Klein tensed up, his thoughts rapidly flying through his mind. He quickly considered the corresponding strategies.

As he considered each and every item on his body, his palms unconsciously broke out in cold sweat.

Suddenly, he thought of something!

Without having time to think about the consequences, he reached into his pocket and grabbed something that felt metallic.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Klein took a few steps forward, jerked his arm hard, and threw the object in his palm at the altar.

With a flash of bronze, the object entered the barrier of light.

It was an ancient, simple key.

It was the Master Key.

Within the barrier of light, the brass Master Key began to decompose and melt.

And when its outer shell disappeared, the curse that was hidden within it appeared, connecting to the unknown area where Mr. Door was.

...

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

Audrey stood by the full-length window and worriedly looked into the distance.

She saw that the fog on the horizon was gradually thickening, turning a pale yellow that was dyed iron-black as it slowly spread in her location.

“There’s something wrong with that.” The huge golden retriever, Susie, sat beside her and also looked at the commonly seen haze.

Yes, I hope it can be stopped in time... Audrey didn’t know what the fog represented. She silently prayed to the Goddess and Mr. Fool that “They” wouldn’t let the Primordial Demoness descend.

Suddenly, she noticed that the branches outside the window were beginning to shake and the glass was slightly rattling.

A wind is coming... Audrey felt inexplicably happy.

Cherwood Borough, Holy Wind Cathedral.

Terrifying storms that were visible to the naked eye suddenly appeared outside of it, and then they surged towards the east in an unimaginable hurricane.

Whoosh!

The thick, accumulated fog was blown away, and the rich yellow and iron-black colors quickly faded away.

Whoosh!

Dried branches fell to the ground as dust and dirt rose into the air, following the fog into the distance.

Whoosh!

Many of the pedestrians had their hats separate from their heads, and their bodies swayed so much that they had to hold onto trees or walls.

The sailors in the dock area felt as though they had returned to the port city and were witnessing a typhoon.

The smoke in East Borough and the factory district thinned, and the healthy population felt relieved of their slight discomfort.

Boom! Boom!

Lightning leaped and thunder rumbled.

They soon subsided, and a downpour began to cleanse the land.

“The Church of Storms reacted rather quickly this time... It also has to do with us bringing the operation forward and not being fully prepared... Heh heh, those in the middle-class and the tycoons would’ve shared the same fate in this Great Smog as the commoners if it wasn’t for the respective protection they received. They would all be lambs waiting to be slaughtered...” Lady Despair sat on a rental carriage as she leisurely heard the pattering of the rain on the glass windows.

Even though her plans had been ruined in a timely manner, the haze from before had caused more than 20,000 deaths according to her calculations. Furthermore, there would be the subsequent spread of the plague.

With this, I’ve pretty much digested most of my potion, but this is just a benefit I received as a matter of convenience... With large numbers of the population being wiped out, all this points to the Aurora Order and to the True Creator; no one could guess what the royal family really plans on doing... It’s time I leave, along with Trissy... Lady Despair thought while in a good mood.

Her whereabouts were kept secretive, and she had taken care of everything beforehand; therefore, she didn’t have to worry about being surrounded by Backlund’s demigods at all.

By the time they found traces of her, she would already be far away from the city!

Just as the Lady Despair was about to leave the carriage, her vision blurred and she saw a figure appear before her.

The figure sat across her. It was a young woman in a hooded classical robe, with black eyes and hair, and a beautiful but dull face.

...

After throwing out the Master Key, Klein held Azik’s copper whistle, then he held his breath and waited for the results.

If things failed to develop as he imagined, with the altar's barrier remaining intact, he planned on using Azik's copper whistle to see if he could get any help from the messenger.

If that still failed, he would go above the gray fog and use all the items like the Black Emperor card. He had to attempt every possibility until the very last second!

At this very moment, there was no crimson moon, let alone a clear full moon since it was afternoon. Therefore, Klein didn't have enough confidence in the curse contained within the Master Key, and he only hoped that the disintegration effects of the altar's barrier would threaten its very existence and cause it to react instinctively, such as communicating with Mr. Door in reverse and transmitting its cry for help to "Him."

In just a second or two, Klein saw the Master Key disintegrate into the smallest particles of light and an illusory, distorted crimson.

The crimson quickly faded as it struggled and then suddenly exploded!

In an instant, Klein lost his sense of hearing. He saw the countless figures formed from resentment and indignation all raise their heads and scream.

They rapidly transformed, tinged with a blackish-green, and grew a second skull, a third eye, or even a fifth leg...

They converged into a torrent and surged into Mr. A's body.

Mr. A suddenly opened his eyes, shock and disbelief evident amidst his indifferent blood-red eyes.

Soon after, the radiant layer of light surrounding the altar warped and collapsed.

Boom!

A huge explosion spread out from the center of the altar, setting off a terrifying storm.

Crack! The four thick stone pillars closest to the blast instantly crumbled, and the distant Klein only had enough time to duck and roll before he was sent flying by the shockwave.

Bam!

He hit the wall, flattened into a thin sheet of paper.

The subsequent wind quickly tore apart that thin piece of paper, scattering it in every direction.

Klein himself appeared in the corner, using the walls to withstand the ensuing shockwave.

The destruction caused by the Master Key exceeded his imagination!

The curse that had been forcibly melted away really did have an instinctive reaction, as it transmitted Mr. Door's roar, and the voice of this forsaken entity, who was at least at the level of an angel, contaminated the resentment and numbed the despair needed for the ritual. As a result, the altar lost its balance and embarked on a path of self-destruction!

The moment the blast calmed down a little, Klein rushed out to confirm the results.

The illusionary figure and oppressive feeling in the air had already vanished, leaving behind scattered remnants of the altar.

Mr. A had his body leaning forward as he knelt by a collapsed pillar. He was missing an arm, half a face, and a number of organs. His remaining eye was filled with bone-deep hatred.

However, his wounds were quickly covered with squirming flesh. After that single glance, Klein didn't hesitate to run.

For him, he had achieved the ultimate goal of foiling the True Creator's descent. If he didn't leave now, was he, a Sequence 6, going to share a dinner with the Shepherd, Mr. A, to welcome the new year?

The moment she saw the stranger appear in front of her, Lady Despair materialized a sharp, crystalline ice spear and threw it at her target.

Using the force of the recoil, she attempted to break through the back of the carriage and into the street.

With regards to this sudden turn of events, she was puzzled at this strange enemy who suddenly appeared. On the contrary, she was very confused and perplexed as to how someone could find her concealed self so quickly. It was no less difficult than destroying a large city, or teleporting directly from Backlund to the Southern Continent of East Balam.

But as a Sequence 4 Demoness of Despair, she had developed herself one step at a time from when she was an Assassin. She knew that she couldn't afford to be distracted or spout nonsense at such critical moments. It wasn't too late to think about all these matters later.

Therefore, she chose to attack directly and wanted to take the opportunity to leave.

She could already imagine how the strange woman with black hair and eyes would be frozen in the layers of sparkling light left in the frosty wake of the ice spear's trajectory. She would have to struggle to break through the obstruction in order to have the strength to chase after her.

By then, she definitely would've escaped from the street and blended into the crowd.

However, the scene she was looking forward to didn't appear. As soon as the crystalline ice spear left her hand, it silently disappeared into thin air, its whereabouts were completely unknown.

Angel! The Demoness of Despair's eyes narrowed as black flames suddenly surged from her body, spreading ailments in a bid to ignite everything around her and causing a large-scale fire.

At that moment, her body trembled in a strange manner, and she froze on the spot.

She saw her left hand disappear, one centimeter at a time, as it rapidly spread upward in an unstoppable fashion.

In her eyes, the beautiful and lifeless eyes of the woman opposite her were dark and serene, as if there was a pure darkness concealed within.

“You aren’t! You are...”

The Demoness of Despair’s words came to an abrupt halt. Her entire body was like a sketch that had been quietly erased with an eraser, leaving no trace behind.

Her final gaze was filled with fear and despair. The seat she previously occupied was empty, as though she had never sat in it before.

The beautiful woman with the lifeless expression pulled the hood of her classical robe, and her lips moved almost imperceptibly as her figure instantly disappeared.

...

On the outskirts of Empress Borough. On a trackless public carriage.

Triss was sitting quietly in the corner, wearing a veiled hat.

She didn’t flee with the help of the river by going straight to the Tussock River, nor did she head for the nearest railroad to catch a train, as everyone thought she would.

Her choice was to return to Backlund.

Only in this city with a population of over five million, with all sorts of hidden factions and numerous Beyonders, would they be able to help her escape the subsequent pursuit of the Demoness Sect!

At this moment, she felt tense, mentally, constantly wary of the terrifying old butler, Funkel.

Suddenly, her head spun.

When her vision returned to normal, she found herself having magically left the public carriage and was standing on the muddy road outside.

Trissy’s pupils contracted rapidly as she looked around cautiously.

Then, she saw a black-hooded figure in a classical robe, and she noticed the black eyes hidden in the shadows.

For some reason, it was as if Trissy had returned to being an infant, so weak to the point that she couldn't put up any resistance at all.

Cold sweat dripped from her forehead, and although her legs were trembling violently, she was unable to move.

This is the scariest enemy I've ever faced... Even the high-ranking Demoness I previously met didn't give me such a feeling... Am I going to die here... Is this finally going to end after I persisted in escaping despite failing so many times... A deep sense of despair and uncontrollable sadness filled Trissy's heart, making her feel as if she had plunged into her deepest nightmare.

Suddenly, a dim blue light flashed before her eyes, removing her "curse" of being unable to move.

Trissy looked forward again, but there was no longer any traces of that extremely terrifying figure. Everything that happened just now seemed like the most realistic illusion.

But when Trissy lowered her head, she was surprised to find that the sapphire ring on her left pinky had somehow shattered, losing all of its brilliance.

Crack. Crack. Crack. The remains of the ring and the gem fell off one after another.

...

Klein dodged and rolled around the collapsed stone pillar and the heavily injured Mr. A, who was in the process of healing, and he ran for the entrance opposite him.

As for the characteristic fragments which were slowly gathering from the remains of the Master Key, he didn't even take a glance at them, afraid that he would give Mr. A enough time to stop him.

He was well aware that even if he had all his mystical items and was well-prepared, he wouldn't necessarily be a match for the Shepherd, not to mention the fact that he was only equipped with Azik's copper

whistle and three types of Beyonder bullets. He didn't even have a single match left.

Even though Mr. A was seriously injured, Klein didn't dare to take the risk. He had heard that the Rose Bishop, the Sequence prior to Shepherd, was extremely proficient in flesh magic. Its healing ability was in no way weaker to his ability of transferring his wounds.

Creak!

He pulled open the heavy door.

The natural light outside shone in, and the clouds in the sky were tinged with a thin yellow, and the sun was pale and dim.

Klein rushed out and found that he was in the middle of a mountain. He was surrounded by towering mountains that made the area extremely hidden.

Tap. Tap. Tap. He frantically ran and wasn't even taking the mountain trail. Instead, with his skills as a Clown, he ran down the steep slope, occasionally tumbling, and occasionally swinging up with the help of trees.

Splash!

He heard the crashing of the river. It was up ahead, just below him!

But at that moment, a strong gust of wind blew over, sweeping towards his back.

Klein made a prompt decision. His knees buckled and he rolled to the side.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

The location where he was originally standing and the direction he was moving in had a deep ravine carved out by the wind blades.

Mr. A dropped out of the wind, his body still draped with a cape squirming with fresh blood.

He pointed with his finger, and immediately, chunks of flesh flew out and swelled up in midair before suddenly exploding.

Boom!

Drops of blood and bits of flesh flew in every direction as Klein cartwheeled with his hands, dodging most of it before finding shelter behind a huge tree.

The projectiles bored bloody holes through the huge tree. Traces of corrosion began spreading in every direction from the affected area.

Back when Klein was running, he had already loaded his revolver. He was about to raise his hand and shoot Mr. A in the eyes when he saw a deep darkness appear within them.

All of a sudden, Klein knew that, although the scenery around him hadn't changed at all, he had been forcefully dragged into a dream.

He had once killed a Nightmare, a Nightmare at least... Klein maintained his consciousness and saw Mr. A phase to his side in a manner inconsistent with logic, turning into a blood-red blanket that enveloped him in a manner that couldn't be escaped from.

You want to rely on nightmares to scare me to the point of stopping my heart? A thought flashed in Klein's mind and he responded.

This was his dream. The lucid him could conjure anything!

Thus, a pure and dazzling golden sun appeared. Clear and blazing flames ignited everything in its surroundings in an instant.

Klein imagined the scene when he first saw the Eternal Blazing Sun during the dream divination!

Almost at the same time, he left the dream and heard a muffled grunt.

Mr. A took a step back, two streams of blood running from the tip of his nose.

The robe formed from flesh and blood began to slowly flow as though it was melting.

Pa!

Klein snapped his fingers and ignited the trees about thirty or forty meters away.

Beneath his feet, the long-withered weeds caught on fire, and the soaring flames enveloped his body.

Mr. A's originally unmanly beautiful face suddenly turned even more beautiful and feminine. A crystalline and weightless ice spear materialized in his hand as he threw it towards the burning trees a few dozen meters away.

As soon as Klein jumped out of the flames, his pupils reflected the transparent tip of the spear.

The tip of the spear became bigger and clearer, filling his eyes.

Klein threw himself to the side as his body became covered with a thin layer of frost.

The transparent spear then extinguished the flames, allowing the thick layer of ice to quickly spread in every direction.

Klein, who was still in midair, suddenly curled up into a ball, turning his body upside down.

He stretched out his left hand and lightly pressed on the layer of ice. He once again rose into the air and left the cold world. However, the skin on his palm was frozen at the point of contact; this resulted in him tearing off his skin with a ripping sound.

Rolling to his feet, Klein reached into his pocket and pulled out a self-made Slumber Charm.

As he was about to say the incantation, his nose suddenly started to itch and he sneezed.

Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!

His head ached and he kept sneezing, leaving him with no strength to fight back.

I fell sick? I became infected by some sort of ailment? The moment Klein realized this, he felt countless threads that were difficult to be seen by the naked eye twirl around him, wrapping him up like a mummy in a certain sense.

He wasn't unfamiliar with this kind of experience. He knew that this was the Beyonder powers of a Demoness of Pleasure.

Back then, he had relied on the use of charms to cause all parties to fall into a deep slumber. Then, relying on his uniqueness, he escaped the effects of the charm. But now, Mr. A had maintained a distance of about 20 meters.

However, Klein was no longer just a Clown. The fingers he could still move snapped and made a crisp snapping sound!

In an instant, all the "spider silk" around him was ignited, as if it had turned into a giant torch.

Klein had just jumped out of the scarlet flames when he started sneezing again, which was then followed by a fit of violent coughing. This automatically prevented the use of many of his Beyonder powers.

At this moment, the feminine gentleness of Mr. A's face disappeared, adding a little more dignity to his loftiness.

He stretched out his right hand and clenched it lightly. Klein suddenly had an inkling that if he ran, he would only be running in circles.

Mr. A, who was wearing a blood-red robe, revealed a cruel smile. An ancient book that was transparent and illusory appeared in front of him.

An ethereal, high-pitched voice rang out, "I came, I saw, I record." *Achoo! Cough! Cough!*

Klein wanted to hide, but he was powerless. At that moment, he experienced, in an unprecedented manner, the power of a Shepherd. It was truly worthy of being called the most comprehensive, most flawless, and most powerful Beyonder Sequence under the level of a demigod! Even if he hadn't made any preparations, with many mystical items being unusable, for him to be suppressed to such a state without being able to fight back, it implied that there were many problems.

Chapter 479: The Inexplicable Smile

The old butler, Funkel, was fleeing across a barren field in the wilderness.

He had lost his hat, his neatly combed gray hair hung in an unkempt manner, and the outer layer of his clothes were muddy.

Huff. Puff... He paused for a moment, panting as he looked behind him. He felt slightly more at ease when he realized that there was no one around.

However, when he turned his head and was about to change direction, he discovered that a figure had appeared in front of him.

The figure wore a hooded, classical robe; its face was dull and expressionless while its black eyes were hidden in the shadows.

Funkel's pupils constricted. He opened his mouth and tried to say a word in ancient Hermes, but he was surprised to find his nose disappearing and his voice gone.

A look of despair suddenly appeared on his face. Then, like a stain in the void, his entire body was seemingly wiped clean with a cloth, and not a single trace was left behind.

...

Achoo! Achoo! Cough! Cough!

In the face of Mr. A's looming attack that spelled certain death, Klein was infected by an illness. His headache and fever made it difficult to use Flame Controlling or Flaming Jump.

At that moment, he couldn't even produce Air Bullets.

Fear of the unknown took over his mind. The Clown's intuition for danger "saw" himself split into the smallest particles of light, perhaps taking away any chance of him reviving.

In an instant, Klein reached into his pocket and took hold of an object.

This was his answer to the most dangerous situation he could think of ahead of time!

No matter what kind of situation he was suddenly placed in, a Magician had to be prepared to a certain extent, so that he wouldn't panic in the middle of a battle.

Klein took out Azik's copper whistle, brought it to his mouth, and blew hard over the sneezing and coughing!

Without any stirring motions, he saw, through his Spirit Vision, a geyser of white bones spewing out as they rapidly sketched out the appearance of a huge messenger with black flames burning in its eye sockets.

And at that moment, the pages in the book in front of Mr. A stopped flipping, and the distant voice suddenly came to a halt.

A misty green brilliance surged out, and the bone messenger, that was almost four meters tall, cracked and crumbled into countless specks of pure light.

Behind it, the force that had caused Klein to go in circles was the first to crumble. The figure in the black double-breasted frock coat was then enveloped, turning into a statue made of yellow sand which was blown away by the wind.

However, the scattered sand were white spots, as if they were shreds of paper that had been torn to the limit.

Klein's figure appeared on the other end, genuflecting and coughing uncontrollably.

If it wasn't for the skeleton messenger blocking the blow for him, then he wouldn't have been able to suppress his ailments and use Paper Figurine Substitute!

And after that ordeal, his illness worsened to the point of him losing almost all forms of resistance.

At that moment, Mr. A, who had failed in his fatal blow, suddenly coughed in a way more violent manner than Klein.

He fell to the ground in pain, blood frothing at the corners of his mouth.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

He coughed out a pile of fragmented organs and squirming flesh. Then, with great difficulty, he opened his mouth and attempted to lick them back into his mouth to forcefully consume them.

What's going on? Klein was stunned for a moment.

But that didn't stop him from resisting a cough, raising his right hand, and aiming the revolver at Mr. A's head.

At this moment, he vaguely understood something—while Mr. A's injuries could be treated with his flesh and blood magic, the impact and backlash on his mind and spirituality couldn't be nullified through this method.

Mr. A should've switched to another Beyonder power to slowly heal the damage to his Spirit Body, but he was driven by hatred. He forcefully suppressed his injuries and chased after Klein; thus, after continuously using the Beyonder powers that exceeded what his body could bear, his situation worsened and the latent problems flared up.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Klein fired all the bullets in the revolver. Bronze, pale gold, and silver beams of light quickly crossed the short distance between the two of them.

Unfortunately, he was unable to control his sneezing and coughing during the process. The bullets didn't all hit Mr. A, with only two of them hitting Mr. A, and one of them drilling through his forehead and the other into his torso.

Sizzle!

A sizzling sound rang out, but Mr. A's head seemed to be boneless — it was just a combination of a pile of rotten flesh. This caused the pale golden-colored bullet to sink deep into his body. It quickly came to a stop and failed to deal lethal damage. All it did was emit a golden radiance of sunshine.

Mr. A lifted his neck, and the flesh around the hole in his head writhed wildly.

He wasn't dead, not even seriously injured.

He was once the tenacious Rose Bishop!

Seeing this, Klein made up his mind. He turned around and ran, no longer making any attempts to attack. As for Mr. A, he was panting, and when he lowered his head again, he licked the bits of fragmented flesh and organs he had coughed up.

Amidst the wheezing and coughing, Klein ran in random directions, occasionally rolling.

Finally, he fled to the edge of a cliff which was over fifty meters away.

Beneath the cliff, the slightly turbid Tussock River surged incessantly. It was wide but calm.

Klein didn't hesitate and put strength into his legs and jumped.

He plummeted, feeling the weightlessness of a free fall.

His body tore through the air as he attempted to adjust his posture in midair, transforming into a standard diving motion.

Cough! Achoo!

His ailment stopped his three and a half flips midway, and the positioning of his body and palms failed to be in the correct stance.

With a splashing sound, he struck the water surface, reducing into a thin piece of white paper.

The paper figurine quickly became moist, half sinking and half floating.

At the bottom of the river not far away, Klein's figure formed as it shivered a little.

His clothes were already soaked, as were the remaining paper and bills in his wallet.

After distancing myself from Mr. A, the ailment has abated... Klein thought with a lingering sense of fear.

If his coughing and sneezing hadn't subsided at the last minute, he wouldn't have even had the time to use Paper Figurine Substitutes, and he would've suffered internal bleeding and instantly died. Of course,

if he died in such a manner, he felt that he had a chance of being resurrected.

While kicking his legs to keep himself afloat, Klein created an invisible, hollow tube in his mouth, allowing it to rise out of the water and bring him fresh air.

This was the Underwater Breathing performance of a Magician!

Klein sucked in with his mouth and blew out through his nose, not letting the turbid gas he breathed out pollute the pipe by directly entering the water.

At the same time, he stealthily made his way to the shore, hoping to avoid Mr. A's subsequent pursuit.

Unfortunately, this isn't a city. The powers of a Faceless cannot be used effectively. Otherwise, once I break away, Mr A definitely wouldn't be able to find me... While swimming, Klein instinctively had this thought.

This resulted in him thinking of a problem, and that was the wind-controlling Beyonder power Mr. A previously had.

Generally speaking, this belongs to the pathway of the Lord of the Storms... For this pathway, apart from the wind, there's also water, which means they're especially effective for underwater activities... Underwater activities... Shepherd is so all-rounded and terrifying! Klein's heart almost stopped beating as the thought flashed through his mind.

He suddenly swam upstream, no longer concealing himself!

As soon as he emerged from the water and approached the shore, he saw Mr. A's devilishly beautiful face, covered with fish scales and gaping gills.

Mr. A, who was floating on the water surface in his bright red robe, had the corners of his mouth curled up. His eyes were filled with true hatred.

Fight! I can only fight! I'll try to hold out until the Church's reinforcements arrive or for Mr. Azik to escape his predicament!

Without hesitation, Klein, who had gained reprieve from his ailments, raised his right hand, ready to snap his fingers.

At this moment, the two of them simultaneously looked at the sky as though it was an instinctive reaction.

A beautiful feminine figure was quickly outlined.

The figure was hooded and in a dark robe, its eyes looking blankly at Mr. A.

Then, Klein saw Mr. A being quickly erased as though he had become a pencil drawing, wiped out rapidly with an eraser, leaving nothing but his look of indignation and despair amidst the blankness and madness etched into his mind that was the only audience present.

This... What kind of level is this!? What kind of strength is this! The moment Klein thought about it, he saw the figure turn to look at him.

It was a beautiful face, but it didn't have the slightest expression. Its black eyes were deep and dark, devoid of spirituality.

Just when Klein's heart was beating rapidly, thinking that he would disappear without a trace, without a clue as to whether he could be resurrected, the corners of the woman's mouth slowly lifted into a smile.

A smile? Klein was stunned, wondering if he was dreaming.

Before he could regain his senses, the figure instantly faded and disappeared from where he was. The sound of water splashing around him echoed in the air.

Puzzled, Klein swam to the shore and got out of the water. Looking around, he found that this place was unusually remote. There were no roads or living people. Only the slightly turbid river water continued flowing in an unchanging manner.

It ended just like that? Mr. A died just like that? Who was that lady just now? She was so strong that Mr. A didn't even have time to scream... And she smiled at me. Smiled... Maybe it's a "She?" However, other than figures at the level of the Pope, how could there be angels walking on the ground from the three Churches. Furthermore, a figure on the

level of Pope obviously wouldn't be in Backlund... Klein couldn't believe that he was out of the danger zone.

After a moment of contemplation, he finally felt a sense of reality.

She should be a powerhouse sent by the Churches. She arrived in time and successfully saved me.

If I hadn't informed Miss Justice ahead of time, then they might not have taken such timely action. There would've been a high chance of me dying at Mr. A's hands, with the possibility of resurrection being a question...

Yes, it also has to do with me persisting on, dragging on the battle all the way until this moment.

Not bad at all...

With a sigh of relief, Klein began to look for a way out.

...

"Exile!"

The man with the gold mask pointed at Azik Eggers and threw his figure into the void, a spot no one knew.

Then, he turned around to face Ince Zangwill, who was looking at him with a frown.

"There's no time, we can't finish him off that quickly! We have to hide this area as quickly as possible. Do you want the Church to discover our secret?" The man with the gold mask growled angrily.

Ince Zangwill put away his doubts, nodded, turned to 0-08 which had stopped writing, and grabbed it.

His figure was faltering somewhat, and by his legs were piled pants that had nearly been ripped apart in the middle of the battle.

...

Inside Red Rose Manor, Prince Edessak sat by the full-length windows with an abnormally vacant look in his eyes.

"Your Highness, please hurry." A voice sounded beside him.

Edessak's eyes turned spirited as he took a breath, picked up the revolver on the table, and pressed it against his temple. Inside it was a bullet that obliterated Spirit Bodies.

He turned his head and looked longingly out at the golf course and the strolling horses.

Bang!

He pulled the trigger.

In the hall where the stone pillars had collapsed, a group of Nighthawks wearing black trench coats and silk hats appeared around the altar. The person leading the team was the Archbishop of the Church of Evernight, Saint Anthony Stevenson.

"It was disrupted by someone?" he muttered without stopping and directly walked to the stone door that led to the interior.

Rich darkness surfaced as the stone door silently opened. Saint Anthony led some of the Nighthawks in as they delved deeper.

Along the way, they didn't discover a single guard or anything of value. It was as if this place had been forcefully swept clean.

Finally, they reached a room in the deepest recesses, but there was nothing there but walls and stone pillars. The blue door of light which was there when Klein left was long gone.

The lanterns in the Nighthawks' hands suddenly lost their light, and darkness enveloped the room.

When everything returned to normal, they found that the surrounding walls had somehow melted away. However, there were no hidden doors or tunnels behind them. It was either a thick layer of mud and rocks or the corridor they came from.

Saint Anthony was silent for more than ten seconds before saying, "Try divination.

"Search the vicinity."

...

Achoo!

Walking through the pathless cliffs and forest, Klein was saddened to realize that he had apparently really fallen sick.

The residual effects of Mr. A's Beyonder powers, combined with the fact that he was drenched during winter, gave him the shameful cold.

However, he didn't dare to stop to collect dry twigs to light a fire and dry his clothes and money. He was afraid that the Beyonders of the Church would find him.

Even though he had already gained the endorsement of Stanton Isengard from the Machinery Hivemind and obtained the status of a semi-official, this was a matter involving the Primordial Demoness's awakening and the True Creator's descent—two cases of the highest order. Therefore, he was bound to be subjected to rigorous investigations, have tea sessions with the Machinery Hivemind, Mandated Punishers, and Nighthawks to recount the whole process actively or passively.

There were two major pitfalls to this. One was that he knew people inside the Nighthawks, and although Detective Sherlock Moriarty looked quite different from the martyred Klein Moretti, making it impossible to identify him via photographs, he had zero confidence if things were done face to face. Two, because of similar pathways, the Church of Evernight wasn't very friendly to people and things related to Death. Back in the Pale Era at the end of the Fourth Epoch, Death had fallen under the siege of the seven gods, and Sherlock Moriarty had "summoned" a powerful descendant of Death at the critical moment. This wasn't a problem that could be explained away easily.

That high-level powerhouse was rushing to deal with Ince Zangwill and 0-08, so she didn't have time to bother with a friendly small fry like me. However, I can't be careless as a result. I should flee when it's necessary!

Yes, I can write to the Machinery Hivemind when I have a chance, stating the second reason as to why I have to temporarily leave Backlund. This way, I might still have a chance to work with them in the future. Of course, I have to secretly observe to see if the Machinery Hivemind has any strong enmity towards any descendants of Death... I wonder how Mr. Azik is doing...

Heh heh, perhaps Sherlock Moriarty might be dead in the official announcement. He sure lived up to his name and identity...

As quickly as possible, Klein tried to find a small town and blend in with the crowd while enduring the alternating fever and cold.

Only in human society could the Faceless's powers be fully expressed.

The woman who was working with Mr. A, uh—she should be a Demoness. She went to East Borough... From the looks of the ritual, there must've been a large number of deaths over there. I wonder... With the spiritual intuition of a Seer, Klein's heart suddenly felt heavy.

At this moment, all the colors in front of his eyes turned saturated, as if they had been sprinkled with oil by a deity.

The feeling was over instantly, and Klein found himself far away from where he had been, with the bronze-skinned, soft-featured Azik Eggers appearing next to him.

"Mr. Azik, are you unhurt?" He couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief.

"I am," Azik replied frankly before smiling, "but to an Undying, this isn't a big problem."

Klein calmed down and asked, "What happened to Ince Zangwill and 0-08?"

"Ince Zangwill is still alive, and he still wields that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact," Azik said as he walked.

Klein tried hard to follow him as he couldn't help but sigh.

"What a pity."

"Don't worry about it; he was severely injured," Azik solemnly said. "And most importantly, we know that he was secretly cooperating with the royal family, so we don't have to worry about not being able to find him in the future. This way, you can focus on improving yourself, and I can also try to go to a few places that I've recalled, to awaken more memories. Heh heh, your luck isn't bad. I've been secretly observing the people from MI9 and the royal family to confirm Ince Zangwill's whereabouts. One of the most important places was Red Rose Manor, so I've always been wandering around the area. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to rush over to save you so quickly."

Klein immediately felt a little awkward when this was mentioned.

“Mr. Azik, aren’t you puzzled as to why I didn’t die?”

“I often wake up after entering a coffin as well. This is something that I previously recalled,” Azik said with a smile, completely unfazed by the matter. “And in my incomplete memory, although it’s rare in others, it’s not without precedent.”

He often wakes up after entering a coffin... Often? Klein suddenly realized that the problems that he was worried about were nothing in the eyes of a real powerhouse.

As expected of an Undying of the Death pathway... Well, Mr. Azik had mentioned that he had been in this Sequence for a long time, which means that he has long advanced... Klein thought for a moment, then he asked with concern, “Mr. Azik, Would Ince Zangwill discover that I’m Klein Moretti?”

He was afraid that Ince Zangwill would take revenge on Benson and Melissa.

“Unlikely. At most, he would believe that we knew each other long ago, or that you’re my... informant, if we use the terms that the police uses.” Azik recalled and said, “But that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact might notice it, but you don’t have to worry.” “Why?” Klein pressed.

It was unknown what Azik had remembered, but his expression suddenly turned strange. It was as if he wanted to laugh, but at the same time, he felt horrified.

“That Grade 0 Sealed Artifact will keep attempting to write down the death of its owner. This is likely to be intrinsic to it and cannot be changed. Therefore, I doubt it would actively divulge such important information that can put Ince Zangwill at a tremendous advantage during such a critical moment—unless it involves something that it cannot avoid or explain.”

Seeing that Mr. Azik was so sure about it while producing such strong justifications, Klein exhaled. It was as if he had recovered a little from the cold.

Seeing this, Azik added, “It’s best if you leave Backlund for the time being. Ince Zangwill might use that Grade 0 Sealed Artifact to seek revenge again, using your fake name.

“As long as you aren’t in Backlund, it should be fine. That Grade 0 Sealed Artifact’s sphere of influence doesn’t exceed a large city.”

Just as I had predicted, there’s a limit to its sphere of influence... Otherwise, Ince Zangwill could’ve easily hidden in a small town in the Southern Continent and leisurely arrange the fates of all his targets without having to worry about anyone finding him... Klein asked after some deliberation, “A short trip to Backlund for a day or half a day is fine, right? With the premise that I’ve changed my identity and looks.”

With that, he rubbed his face, instantly reverting back to his appearance back in Tingen.

Azik’s eyebrows twitched, and he nodded.

“It’s fine.”

He turned his head and looked into the distance at the spot that he could no longer see.

“It seems like I’ve been targeted by a powerful existence of the Church of Evernight. It’s best if you don’t stay by my side, or you might be implicated. Heh heh, they’re very interested in the Beyonder characteristics related to Death.”

“Yes, I plan on heading out to sea. While I digest my potion, I’ll be seeking mermaids. It’s a condition for my advancement,” Klein explained his plan.

Azik tilted his head.

“Mermaids? Could a mermaid in the form of a dead spirit work? I can find at least four.”

“Probably... not...” Klein reached out and wiped his forehead.

His intuition told him that it was definitely impossible, but he planned to divine it above the gray fog to confirm it.

Without mentioning the dead mermaid again, Azik said, “If there’s anything, then contact me through the messenger.” *Messenger...* Klein suddenly felt guilt-ridden and ashamed.

“I-it died in my battle with Mr. A. It saved my life.”

Azik gave him a glance, shook his head, and laughed.

“Don’t worry about it. As long as it isn’t killed by a powerhouse at the level of an angel or via some special method, then as long as the Underworld still exists, it can slowly be reborn there.

“And before that, I have similar messengers numbering... Uh, I don’t know how many there are either.”

It sounds like there’s an army of such powerful and humongous messengers? Klein turned agape, unable to say a word.

His shame faded, and he asked curiously, “Mr. Azik, where is the Underworld, or in other words, hell?”

“The spirit world. To be precise, it’s a special place that the ancient Death created in the spirit world.” Azik didn’t hide the truth.

Ancient Death? That should be the ancient god, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace... So the Underworld belongs to the spirit world. No wonder the basic structure in mysticism is the real world, the spirit world, and the astral world. It doesn’t contain the Underworld and the Abyss... Klein was about to ask a question when he suddenly remembered something and quickly said, “Mr. Azik, I obtained a Card of Blasphemy created by Emperor Roselle. It contains the secrets of High-Sequence Beyonders. I believe it can help you recall more things. However, you’ll have to wait a while. It’s hidden in Backlund.”

Klein didn’t mention the bounty, fearing that it would reveal the Tarot Club’s secret, the mysterious space above the gray fog, and Miss Justice; therefore, he could show his gratitude towards Mr. Azik for his help and sacrifice, in this tactful way.

Aziz looked at him in surprise, but he ultimately said nothing. He nodded and said, “When you get it back, have the messenger bring it to me. I’ll immediately return it to you after I study it. Or you can copy the contents and pass it to me.”

He paused for a moment as if he had thought of something. Then, he took out a glove that was so thin that it looked like it was made of human skin from his pocket and handed it to Klein.

"I've already awakened the relevant memories, so I no longer need it. Heh heh, it's an item that that pirate vice admiral left behind. I've placed some seals on it so that it wouldn't be hungry. However, every time it's used it will require you to use a human's flesh and soul to feed it; otherwise, it will devour you."

...Creeping Hunger? The remains of a particular Shepherd? Klein immediately recalled what the glove represented.

Chapter 481: Statistics and People

In a small town on the outskirts of Backlund.

After changing into clean and dry clothes, Klein placed the wet bills on the surface of the table, one by one, waiting for them to dry naturally in the warm room.

During this process, he moved very carefully and very gently. Even his sneezing and coughing which were brought by the fever had been forcefully suppressed.

To make sure there were no mistakes, he didn't dry them by controlling a flame.

Having done all this, he walked to the corner of the hotel room, where there was a full-length mirror.

Klein's black hair was neatly combed in the mirror. He had a pair of dark brown eyes, and his face was thin and angular.

He had gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose and was beardless. He looked young but also experienced.

This was a modification of Zhou Mingrui's appearance, with the traits of a native from the Northern Continent. Moreover, this was his youthful appearance during university when he was filled with vigor, one that had yet to be made fat by society.

He intended to go back to Backlund when things have settled down a little, and then he would get himself a legal identity for his current appearance. Compared to when he left Tingen, he had no shortage of appropriate channels. For example, he had Ian at the Bravehearts Bar, Miss Sharron's circle, and Detective Isengard Stanton.

How nostalgic... Klein whispered. He busied himself with a ritual in the room where the curtains had been drawn. He planned to bring Creeping Hunger above the gray fog to study it safely.

Inside the silent, ancient palace, he appeared at the very end of the long bronze table, leaning back in his chair while holding a pair of thin gloves made of human skin.

Immediately after, he closed his eyes and extended his spirituality into the object that required sealing.

He immediately felt the hunger of the glove. It was as if it had a stomach that could never be filled, but above the gray fog, it was so tame that it didn't dare let out even the slightest bit of malice. It was like a hunting dog lying there, not daring to move at all.

Then, Klein heard cries of indignation and groans of pain.

Many distorted, hideous, and grieving faces appeared in his spiritual perception, brimming with unspeakable melancholy and madness.

These faces were deeply fused with the Beyonder characteristics of different colors and different states. Wherever Klein's spirituality spread, it would combine with the corresponding faces and use the powers it had.

This is the way to use it? Together with the help of divination, Klein made one attempt after another and figured out what the five souls that the Creeping Hunger could use for Grazing.

The first was Faceless, but it only had the powers to change his appearance and build.

The second was Psychiatrist. He could make a target fall into a frenzied state, place a certain amount of psychological cues; and could simulate a dragon's might, intimidating individuals and groups, and creating chaos.

The third was Interrogator. It allowed the wearer of the glove to be proficient in the use of all kinds of weapons, become a demolition expert, possess the ability to focus his mind, and have the ability to pierce a target's Spirit Body.

The fourth was Nightmare. There was only one power, which was to drag someone into a dream without being detected. However, it was unlike a Beyonder of the corresponding Sequence. It was accomplished by Creeping Hunger, so the wearer could still move their bodies after entering a Nightmare state.

The fifth was Priest of Light. It allowed him to produce a halolike effect, purifying all undead and foul creatures within a certain range.

At the same time, he also had the singing ability of a Bard which could strengthen his companions, as well as summon the Light of Holiness which was weaker than Flaring Sun.

The limit is five souls, and the powers are fixed when "Grazing" for the first time... This isn't something I can decide for myself. It's purely based on luck; maybe there can be three or just one... Klein thoughtfully nodded, sighed, and said to the suffering souls, "No matter what kind of people you were in the past, I will gradually free you from your imprisonment to acquire complete deliverance.

"In the future, the souls I graze will only come from people who have committed heinous and unforgivable crimes. For every such Beyonder I kill, I'll replace one of you and release you, regardless of whether I need their powers or not."

His solemn but gentle voice echoed within the ancient palace. The wailing souls quieted down, no longer writhing in a hideous fashion.

Phew... Klein exhaled, opened his eyes, tapped the edge of the ancient table with his fingers, and said to himself, *That Faceless's powers overlap with mine, so it's completely useless. Once I have something to replace it with, I'll release him first. Yes, when the time comes, I can attempt to channel his spirit and converse with him. Perhaps I might receive information regarding the high Sequences of the Seer pathway, as well as clues to the whereabouts of mermaids... No, there's no need to wait for a replacement. In a few days, I can make the attempt when I fully recover from my cold...*

The soul corresponding to the Priest of Light should be able to complete the incomplete formulas I previously obtained. Furthermore, he'll leave behind the corresponding Beyonder characteristic. That way, Little Sun doesn't need to worry about his subsequent advancements. Yes, he will be the second to be released...

As for me needing to feed a human's soul and flesh to Creeping Hunger every time it's used, that's not something I need to pay attention to. I usually wouldn't use it anyway. When using it, I'll definitely be facing a terrifying enemy. In such a battle, there's no lack of lives to cull. Even if there isn't, I can throw Creeping Hunger above the gray fog and not

be worried about it's backlash, nor do I need to be afraid of harming the innocent. The worst outcome would it becoming unusable...

Putting his thoughts away, Klein tried to use the mystical item, Creeping Hunger, to divine the formula for the Shepherd potion but ended up failing.

He didn't divine the origins of Creeping Hunger, afraid that he would provoke an unfriendly existence.

Although he wasn't afraid of endangering himself due to the gray fog's isolation and obstruction, doing so could likely damage Creeping Hunger.

I'll consider trying that out when I no longer need it... Klein leaned forward and rested his elbows on the table.

He quickly recalled the previous matters and keenly noticed a detail.

After the Master Key was obliterated, its Beyonder characteristic didn't disappear. Instead, it became dots of light, trying hard to converge...

It can be assumed that the Apprentice characteristic that's formed in the end will no longer contain Mr. Door's roars.

In other words, such a method can be used to rid the mental corruption inside a Beyonder characteristic!

But the underlying problem is that there's no way to destroy a Beyonder characteristic which has solidified into an item under normal circumstances. Back then, I was relying on a ritual that could allow a true god to descend. It needed the prerequisite of a large number of innocent lives...

Also, once the All-Black Eye is shattered, the True Creator's mental corruption that's hidden within will definitely erupt. When that happens, who can withstand it? Do it above the gray fog?

As these thoughts crossed his mind, Klein remembered what could've happened at East Borough. He hurriedly conjured a pen and paper to make the appropriate divination.

After receiving the revelation, his expression sank, and slowly, he leaned back in his chair.

Below him, the endless gray fog floated in silence in a seemingly eternal unchanging fashion.

...

Audrey stood by the window, looking at the fog mixed with pale yellow and iron-black colors rapidly disperse. When she saw the heavy rain that was incompatible with winter, her heart felt more at ease.

After an unknown period of time, she and Susie waited for Earl Hall's eventual return home.

"Father, how is it?" Audrey asked with concern.

Earl Hall smiled warmly as he handed his coat and hat to an attendant.

"It's resolved, but the exact details are still unclear. My little princess, you've really helped me greatly this time. You deserve a ton of medals!"

That's good, that's good... Thanks to Mr. Fool's reminder, thanks to the risky investigation of "His" Blessed... Our Tarot Club has once again stopped the descent of an evil god and saved the world! Audrey's heart was filled with pride.

Earl Hall took the towel from the maidservant's hands, wiped his face, and sighed.

"However, this time, there were still some serious casualties. To think that Backlund's smog could become so deadly... Although the statistics haven't been tabulated, I estimate that more than ten thousand people died in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district. Furthermore, the plague is still spreading, so please try not to leave the house for the time being."

More than ten thousand people? That was a statistic Audrey could understand but couldn't imagine. Only on the anniversary of the kingdom's founding and during the parade, would she be able to see tens of thousands of people gathered together.

However, this didn't stop her heart from feeling heavy as her mood suddenly turned gloomy.

...

Daisy stood outside her apartment, watching the doctors and nurses in white coats and masks enter and carry out the bodies.

She had long known the outcome. Her expression was numb and her eyes vacant. She subconsciously moved closer to the door.

At this moment, the police officer in charge of the cordon stopped her.

"Don't go over. Do you want to be infected with the plague?"

Daisy stood there as she watched the two bodies being carried out. She saw her mother, Liv, hugging her sister, Freja, tightly. They were carried to a cargo carriage that was wrapped in black cloth and temporarily requisitioned. She then watched as they disappeared in front of her eyes as a white cloth covered them.

The carriage slowly moved towards the other end of the street.

At that moment, Daisy seemed to wake up from a dream. She turned around and ran at full speed, chasing after the carriage.

The ground was abnormally muddy after the rain. She fell and got up several times, leaving her body covered in dirt.

However, she was still unable to catch up with the carriage and could only watch it disappear around the corner.

Daisy slowed her pace, her body swaying slightly as her expression turned abnormally vacant.

She held onto the trees by the street and stared at the place where the carriage had left.

Suddenly, her entire body went limp, and she started weeping.

"Mother...

"Freja..."

The voice was soft, low, sharp, weak, and lingered.

At this moment, in East Borough, the dock area, and the factory district, tens of thousands of people were similarly crying out in grief.

...

Empress Borough, Sodela Palace.

Wearing a crown above his resolute face and thin mustache, George III sat on the throne. He stared at the earl palatine in front of him without saying a word.

“Your Majesty, the people from the three churches are waiting outside for your explanation,” the earl palatine asked as sweat dripped down his forehead.

“Explanation? Prince Edessak was seduced by a Demoness, causing him to collude with a cult and attempt to rebel. That is the explanation! His schemes were exposed, and he has already committed suicide. What other explanations do they need!?” George III suddenly flew into a rage.

He took a deep breath and regained his usual solemnity.

“You tell them that anyone who obtains the corresponding aristocratic title via any means can get a seat in the House of Lords. The property restrictions needed for elections will be relaxed, and the invalid constituencies will be removed. This is to appease the factory owners and bankers.

“Similarly, the National Atmospheric Pollution Council will immediately make their final statement. The relevant bill will soon be passed, and the minimum safeguards and working hours will appear in the form of a law!

“The Poor Law shall be reformed in accordance with their requests... The Three Churches are permitted to send their personnel into the military!”

“Your Majesty...” The earl palatine was startled.

Such a concession was beyond his imagination, especially the last one.

George III flared up again.

“Tell them this! Since they want a new order, I will give them a new order!”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” The earl palatine didn’t dare say anything further and left the palace.

George III sat there, unmoving for a long time as though he was a stone statue.

After an unknown period of time, his expression suddenly turned gentle.

Chapter 482: Ring out the Old, Ring in the New

Morning of the 31st December, at the Harvest Church south of the Bridge.

Emlyn White stood in a kitchen wearing his priest robes, occasionally tossing different herbs into a large iron pot and stirring them to a certain extent.

After all the pre-prepared ingredients were tossed in, he waited patiently for another ten minutes. Then, he scooped up the inkblack liquid with a metal ladle and poured it into a glass cup and glass bottle beside him.

48, 49, 50... Emlyn glanced at the empty pot and counted the medicine he had brewed.

After confirming the quantity, he picked up a large tray and brought the bottles of dark green liquid to the hall.

In the hall, more than half of the pews had been removed, and the floor was covered with tattered blankets. Lying within them were victims of the plague who were either in deep sleep or groaning in pain.

Emlyn and Father Utravsky worked together, each carrying some of the medicine, distributing it from two ends.

The first person in the queue was a middle-aged man with a sallow complexion. He hurriedly propped himself up halfway, received the medicine, and drank it.

He handed back the bottle and said to Emlyn in gratitude, “Father White, thank you very much. I feel much better and have some strength again!”

Emlyn lifted his chin and replied disdainfully, “This is only an extremely trivial matter that isn’t worth being grateful for. All of you are truly ignorant.”

With that, he sped up the distribution of the potions.

After ten minutes or so, he returned to the altar of Earth Mother and complained to Father Utravsky, “You should get two more volunteers!”

Father Utravsky didn't respond. He looked at the patients and said with a gentle smile, "They should be completely healed in two or three days."

"How do you know?" Emlyn turned his head in surprise.

Father Utravsky looked down at him benevolently and said, "Herbal medicine is one of the domains of the Earth Mother. As 'Her' believer, I do know some of the basics even if I'm not part of the Earth pathway." Emlyn tsked.

"I'm not interested in religion and know little about it."

Although I've been copying Earth Mother's bible in the recent months... he inwardly added in a slightly resentful tone before saying, "Father, I didn't expect you to accept nonbelievers in the faith. Among them, only two or three of them are believers of the Earth Mother."

Father Utravsky smiled without minding what he said.

"They are also lives, innocent lives."

Emlyn paused for a few seconds, exhaled, and said, "Father, I've already found a way to resolve the psychological cue. Perhaps I will leave this place soon."

Wait, why did I mention this? I was actually moved by him. What if he locks me up in the basement again? Emlyn suddenly turned nervous.

Father Utravsky's expression remained unchanged as he looked down and said to Emlyn, "Actually, you didn't need to seek out solutions. In a little while, the psychological cue will be automatically removed, and you will be free to choose whether to come to the cathedral."

"Any longer and I would've become the Mother's, no—Earth Mother's devout believer!" Emlyn blurted out.

Father Utravsky raised an eyebrow and said, feeling somewhat surprised, "I didn't compel you to change your faith.

"The psychological cue I left in you was for you to return to the cathedral every day, hoping that you would be able to fully appreciate the value of life and the joy of a harvest."

“The only effect of the psychological cue was to make me return to the cathedral?” Emlyn’s expression instantly froze.

Father Utravsky nodded frankly.

“Yes.”

“...”

Emlyn’s mouth gaped as he slowly and mechanically turned his head to look back at the altar, looking at the Earth Mother’s Sacred Emblem of Life, as if he had become a puppet that very instant.

...

In the evening of the 31st December. 2 Daffodil Street, Tingen City.

Benson entered the house, took off his hat and coat, and chuckled.

“I’ve booked second class tickets for the steam locomotive to Backlund on 3rd January.”

Melissa, who was sitting in the dining room with several newspapers in front of her, worriedly said, “Benson, the air in Backlund is terrible. Tens of thousands of people have died from the poison and diseases caused by the smog a few days ago...”

“It’s a sad and regretful matter.” Benson walked to the dining room, sighed, and said, “But the two Houses have already passed the report submitted by the National Atmospheric Pollution Council. There will be legislation to regulate the emission of smoke and wastewater, so a new Backlund will welcome us. You don’t have to worry too much.”

Having said that, he smiled mockingly.

“When I came back from Iron Cross Street, I found a lot of factory owners or their employees from Backlund recruiting people. They said that due to the smog and plague, the factories there are suffering a shortage in manpower, so they’re willing to promise that the working hours and minimum wage will be much better than the current standard, heh heh.” “You think it’s impossible?” Melissa asked.

“When more and more people flock to Backlund, it will be impossible unless both Houses pass the corresponding laws directly.” Benson

spread his hands and pointed to the table. “Well, it’s time to receive the new year.”

There were three sets of forks and knives, three empty porcelain plates and three cups on the table.

Three cups. One for beer, two for ginger beer.

...

In the evening of 31st December.

Dressed to the nines, Audrey stood inside a lounge, waiting for the start of the New Year’s Party. However, one couldn’t see the excitement, exuberance, and joy on her face despite the fact that she was about to become an adult.

In front of her was a newspaper. On it was written:

“...According to preliminary estimates, a total of over 21,000 people died in the smog, and the subsequent plague took the lives of close to 40,000 people. Among the deceased were young children, healthy young men, and women...”

Phew. Audrey couldn’t help but close her eyes.

Just then, her father, Earl Hall, and her mother, Lady Caitlyn, knocked on the door and said in unison, “Your beauty surpasses everyone tonight. Darling, it’s time. The queen is waiting for you.”

Audrey slowly breathed out and wore an elegant and beautiful smile. She then walked out of the lounge and entered the party’s hall, under the company of her parents.

She walked all the way up to the front of the dais and, under the gaze of many, handed her white, muslin-gloved hand to the queen.

The queen led her to the edge of the dais as they faced all the guests.

After a short pause, the queen smiled and said, “Although this is a dark period in Backlund’s history, we still have a gem that can illuminate the entire city. Her wisdom, her beauty, her character, her etiquette, are all impeccable.

“Today, I will formally introduce her to you.

“Lady Audrey Hall.”
Bang! Bang! Bang!

Outside the window, the fireworks exploded into a dreamy light.

On the last night of 1349, Audrey officially came of age and was presented to society.

...

In the afternoon of 3rd January 1350.

On the outskirts of East Borough, in a newly opened cemetery.

Using divination, Klein found the graves of Old Kohler and Liv.

This wasn’t a grave in the truest sense of the word, but rather a niche where an urn was stored. They went on, row after row, stacked one above another.

Standing there, Klein saw that not only was there no photograph or epitaph on Old Kohler’s niche, but even his name was missing.

Similar situations weren’t uncommon. There were too many ownerless ashes whose relatives and friends couldn’t be located.

Their names, looks, and whatever experiences they had were unknown, nor did they garner the interest of anyone. They were only distinguished by the numbers on the niches.

Klein closed his eyes, pulled out a slip of paper, shook it into a piece of metal, and carved a word on the niche’s door: “Kohler.”

Then, he added an epitaph: “He was a good worker. He had a wife, a son, and a daughter. He worked hard to live.”

He withdrew his wrist, and with a shake of his wrist, the blackhaired, brown-eyed, and emaciated Klein let the paper burn in his hands, as if it was a memorial service to all the souls residing in the area.

Instead of appearing to help Daisy, who had lost her mother and sister, he anonymously wrote to Reporter Mike Joseph, describing the girl’s predicament in detail, so as not to implicate her in his own affairs.

Mike had met Daisy, knew about her, and had enthusiastically promoted the establishment of a corresponding charity fund. Therefore, Klein believed that he could help her receive more help so that she could complete her basic studies and find a stable job that could support her.

Taking two steps back, Klein looked around, taking in the names, photos, and even the victims who had those missing.

He raised his head, let out a long breath, turned around, and left the cemetery.

On the steam locomotive to Backlund, Melissa was engrossed in her textbooks, and Benson was soon chatting with the passengers around him.

"It's too expensive, just too expensive. A whole ten soli, half a pound!" A burly man who wasn't even thirty sighed from the bottom of his heart. "If it weren't for the fact that I couldn't buy a third-class seat or a boat ticket recently, I wouldn't have spent this money at all. This is equivalent to half a week's worth of my salary!"

"Indeed, there are too many people heading to Backlund after the new year," Benson agreed.

The burly man wiped off his heartbroken expression and said expectantly, "Because they promised me 21 soli a week and that I wouldn't need to work more than 12 hours a day, we signed a contract!

"When I receive my first payment and rent a house, my wife will come to Backlund, and she'll be able to get a good job, a job that pays about 12 or 13 soli a week. It's said that Backlund is in dire need of people! When the time comes, ah, we'll earn a total of over a pound and a half a week, and we'll be able to eat meat frequently!"

"Your wish will definitely be achieved. The king has already signed the bill, passing the law for a minimum wage and maximum working hours," Benson sincerely wished him well before smiling. "This is the Land of Hope." *Woo!*

The steam locomotive brought countless hopeful people to Backlund. The sky was still bright, and the fog in the air had thinned a lot. The gas lamps on the platform were no longer lit that early.

Experienced, Benson protected his sister and wallet before leaving the station with their suitcases while following the crowd.

Suddenly, they simultaneously felt a gaze sweep past them.

Tracing the gaze, Benson and Melissa saw a young gentleman with neat black hair and dark brown eyes.

The gentleman with the gold-rimmed glasses pressed his hat and looked past them into the distance.

Benson and Melissa also looked away and cast their gaze to the smoky pillars in the garden in the middle of the street as they looked forward to seeing the underground transportation system in Backlund.

Carrying his suitcase with an expressionless look, Klein walked past them with his body kept straight. He entered the departure station, facing the mass of people pouring into the Land of Hope, people filled with wonderful hopes in their hearts.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

Author's Notes:

The second volume has written about 850,000 words, which is a very long one in the structure. I think only the third and fourth volumes of The Sage Who Transcended Samsara are more than it. I think and write every day. Although I am very happy, I am really tired. Especially this month, I also added exercise, and almost didn't even have time to read novels.

The title of this book is "Faceless", which is expected to have three meanings. Note that the following are the standard answers for reading comprehension.

The first is to be advance to "Faceless", which is the simplest and easiest to think of.

The second is to represent Klein's living condition in Backlund. He uses fake face, fake name and fake identity to get to knows people, handles things and gets involved in disturbances. But when he returns home, he is still lonely and deserted.

The third refers to those who have been smashed into powder or rushed in the great era. In history books, they have no name, no appearance, no past, no life, and exist only in simple numbers or descriptions. In a sense, isn't this a "Faceless"? The least noticeable cannon fodder, who cares what their faces look like?

Just like the sentence "when one is hungry, one eats another", how much sadness, pain, cruelty, bloody and despair are contained in the simple six words, and how many living people without faces or names are condensed? Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions!

Therefore, I tried to give some descriptions to the Old Kohler, Liv and Freya in the waves of the times, try to restore the hopes, hardships and tragedies of these "Faceless" making them look like people instead of numbers. Although this second part is a big reason for scattered, it is the hidden main line.

As they passed away, more people like them flock in, "Faceless" always existed. They were the stepping stones of the times, the pioneers of the times, and the indispensable roles of the whole story.

With this in mind, I abandoned the more sorrowful and shocking ending. After all, this one is called the faceless people. The best times of the worst era are reversed and echoed, which I can express my desire very well and powerfully. The times is advance, merciless and helpless, but there are countless faceless people lying under their feet.

The title of the third volume will not have so many symbolic meanings, because the main line is very clear and direct. Well, the name of the third volume is "Traveler".

Looking at the meaning of the text, everyone should be able to imagine something, but we will still focus on the second part. There are many things in Backlund that haven't been collected, such as the Snake of Mercury, such as the underground evil spirit, such as the royal family's real plot, such as 0-17, such as vampire, such as Psychology

Alchemists. This is because we need to give opportunities to Audrey, Fors, Xio and Emlyn in Backlund to show themselves. And because Backlund is the most important stage of the whole novel. Klein will definitely come back and stay for a long time.

The second volume said that it was scattered. In fact, after a lot of things were strung together, it was fine. For me, scattered but attractive writing is not bad. The real problem is another point, that is, the rhythm of the story has been relatively tense and tight, not relaxed. In other words, it is constantly encountering events and solving problems. It lacks long enough and easy excess in the middle and it's a bit tired and irritating. Although this leads to the special characteristic aggregation effect, it does have some problems from the setting.

The problem is the Tarot Club will be held once a week, so the timeline will be cut into week after week. It is easy to feel repetitive and inflexible. It is also necessary to keep certain events in each week. Therefore, the rhythm of extraordinary events will be somewhat tight. The solution I am currently considering is to skip some less important Tarot meetings and be more free in time control.

Of course, the Tarot Club itself is also the main body, and it will definitely not be less. For the first time since Emlyn joined, I have not forgotten that there are many friends who mentioned various things, such as the church's reaction, such as another bronze whistle. I remember all of them, but deliberately pressed not to write them and prepared to leave them until the beginning of the third volume.

This is not to let the trivial things dilute or destroy the overall picture feeling and emotional of two pieces, so we can only carry out certain technical processing.

When the second volume was finished, I am very glad to see that the roles have been set up one by one, which makes everyone like it. It's not impossible to use 0-17 to end with violence. On the one hand, it's still awesome to write about the church, which can be the ruling class for so long, not without reason. On the other hand, it is not the ending itself, it is just a continuation, a link between the preceding and the following, pointing to some subsequent things. Let's not talk about it in detail, as not to be a spoiler.

Finally, when writing a novel, I am more and more pursuing simplicity and puncturing. That is to say, what can be described accurately with the easiest and simplest words is to try not to give a long speech, not to fill it with gorgeous things, to accumulate emotions step by the most calm and objective white description, at the most appropriate time, pierce the barrier with the most precise and simple language, and pierce the softest place in your heart.

Now, although there are still many problems, they are just on the way.

Of course, the characteristics of online writing are doomed. I can only do it in the most important and needed chapters. It is impossible to write it in every chapter. A lot of things can only be repaired when I am old and free. In general, I have a lot of vocabulary, but all of them are unfamiliar. After all, they are accumulated step by step and are useless. That is to say, when code words are used habitually, they are used in the list commonly used in the brain. so the problem of repeated words is hard to avoid.

Also, similar to the problem of misusing some adjectives is to present the clearest, most intuitive and most important pictures in my mind, so I try to create some words, but it still needs to be explored and improved.

The above is the technical summary of the second volume.

Writing is a very hard and torturous thing, but when I write it out, I praised, pleasant, especially happy and satisfied. Recently, everyone praised me for being full of enthusiasm.

Gentlemen, I like to write novels!

I like to tell you stories!

I like to create plump characters one by one!

I like to show you an interesting and novel world!

Writing novels is really a joy!

Well, it’s a mystery that today, the high-end subscription of the pure starting platform is 53,000, but it’s all over 41, but after 24hour subscription is 27-28,000 and the lastest chapters have officially

broken through 31,000, which shows that the retention rate is high, which shows that most of the people who have seen are chasing, which shows that you are full of love!

Also, recommended votes have been in the top 15 and monthly tickets have been in the top 5. I am too lazy to brush any data. Therefore, every ticket, every reward and every subscription are full of love!

Gentlemen, the second volume is over. I want to ask for praise and a monthly ticket!

Asking for a monthly passssssssss~

At the end of the day, according to the Convention, we have two days off, that is, Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, at 12:30 noon, it's still the same time.

What, you say Sunday? I didn't hear it, I didn't hear it... Well, I'm kidding. Let's have a rest for half a day after such a long one.

The third volume, "Traveler", please look forward to it!

To be continued in…

Lord Of Mysteries

Traveler

Edited by: ***MidnightSoul***

Amid waves of steam and machinery,
who could rise to achieve the extraordinary?

Through the fog of history and the veil of darkness,
whose voice whispered in the shadows?

I awoke from the realm of mysteries
and opened my eyes to the world.

Firearms, cannons, battleships,
airships, and calculating machines.

Potions, divination, curses, the hanged man,
and sealed relics of power...

The lights blazed brightly,
yet the world's deepest secrets were never far from reach.

This is the legend of the "Fool."

Lord Of Mysteries